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(1)

FROM AN ISLAND

A STORY
AND SOME ESSAYS.

BY

MISS THACKERAY,
AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF ELIZABETH," ETC.

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1931

TO
ALFRED & EMILY TENNYSON

AT FARRINGFORD, ISLE OF WIGHT.

Your name is loved and honoured in a Kingdom which extends far beyond the sleepy silver confines of the little Island where we have all been so happy at times, living round about your home. Allegiance to you comes as an inheritance to me and mine from one who was himself much loved, much honoured. The most generous and the greatest can render best tribute unto Cæsar; others whose tribute is less worth, but who have lived under his kind and noble rule during long years of unchanging countenance and friendship, can at least love the name of Tennyson and write it with gratitude and tenderest respect.

Sep. 29. 1877.

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FROM AN ISLAND.

PART I.

I.

THE long room was full of people sitting quietly in the twilight. Only one lamp was burning at the far end. The verandah outside was dim with shadow; between each leafy arch there glimmered a line of sea and of down. It was a grey still evening, sad, with distant storms. St. Julian, the master of the house, was sitting under the verandah, smoking, with William, the eldest son. The mother and Mrs. William were on a sofa together, talking in a low voice over one thing and another. Hester was sitting at the piano with her hands in her lap, looking music, though she was not playing, with her white dress quivering in the gloom. Lord Ulleskelf, who had come over to see us, was talking to Emilia, the married daughter, and to Aileen, the youngest of the three; while I and my own little girl and the other little ones were playing at the end of the room at a sort of twilight game of beating hands and singing sing-song nursery-rhymes,—hay-making the children called it.

“Are there any letters?” said St. Julian, looking in at them all from his verandah. “Has Emmy got hers?”

1

"I have sent Rogers into Tarmouth to meet the post," said the mother; and as she spoke the door opened, and the post came in.

Poor Emmy's face, which had lighted up eagerly, fell in an instant: she saw that there was no foreign letter for her.

It was a small mail, not worth sending for, Mrs. St. Julian evidently thought as she looked at her daughter with her kind, anxious eyes. "Here is something for you, Emmy," she said; "for you, Queenie" (to me). "The other letter is from Mr. Hexham; he is coming to-morrow."

My letter was from the grocer:—"Mrs. Campbell is respectfully informed by Mr. Tiggs that he has sent different samples of tea and coffee for her approbation, for the use of Mr. St. Julian's household and family: also a choice assortment of sperms. Mr. Tiggs regrets extremely that any delay should have arisen in the delivery of the preserved cherries and apricots. He forwards the order this day, as per invoice. Mr. T. trusts that his unremitting exertions may meet with Mrs. C.'s approval and continued recommendation and patronage.

"Albert Edward House, September 21."

This was not very interesting, except to the house-keeper (Mrs. St. Julian had set me to keep house for her down here in the country). The children, however, who generally insisted upon reading all my correspondence, were much excited by the paragraph in which Mr. Tiggs mentioned cherries and dried apricots. "Why did Mr. Tiggs forget them?" said little Susan; the grand-daughter, solemnly. "Oh, I wish they would

come," said my little missy. "Greedy, greedy!" sang George, the youngest boy. Meanwhile the elders were discussing their correspondence, and the mother had been reading out Mr. Hexham's note:—

"Lyndhurst, September 21.

"Have you room for me, my dear Mrs. St. Julian, and may I come to-morrow for a few days with my van? I find it is a most delightful mode of conveyance, and I have been successful enough to take some most lovely photographic views in the New Forest. I now hope to explore your island, beginning with the 'Lodges,' if you are still in the same hospitable mind you were when I last saw you.

"With best remembrances to your husband and the young ladies,

"Your devoted,

"G. HEXHAM."

"I like Mr. Hexham. I am glad he is coming," said Mrs. St. Julian by way of postscript.

"This is an official-looking missive," said Lord Ulleskelf, holding out the large square envelope, with a great red seal, which had come for Emmy.

"What a handwriting!" cried Aileen. She was only fifteen, but she was taller already than her married sister, and stood reading over her shoulder. "What a letter! Oh, Emmy, what a——"

But Mrs. St. Julian, seeing Emmy flush up, interposed again:—

"Aileen, take these newspapers to your father. What is it, my dear?" to Emilia.

"It is from my sister-in-law," Emilia said, blushing

in the light of the lamp. "Mamma, what a trouble I am to you. . . . She says she is—may she come to stay? . . . And—and—you see she is dear Bevis's sister, and——"

"Of course, my dear," said her mother, almost reproachfully. "How can you ask?"

Emilia looked a little relieved, but wistful still. "Have you room? To-morrow?" she faltered.

Mrs. St. Julian gave her a kiss, and smiled and said, "Plenty of room, you goose." And then she read,—

*"To the Hon. Mrs. Bevis Beverley, The Island,
Tarmouth, Broadshire.*

"Scudamore Castle, September 21.

"My dear Emilia,—Bevis told me to be sure and pay you a visit in his absence, if I had an opportunity, and so I shall come, if convenient to you, with my maid and a man, on Saturday, across country from Scudamore Castle. I hear I must cross from Helmington. I cannot imagine how people can live on an island when there is the mainland for them to choose. Yours is not even an island on the map. Things have been very pleasant here till two days ago, when it began to pour with rain, and my stepmother arrived unexpectedly with Clem, and Clem lost her temper, and Pritchard spoilt my new dress, and several pleasant people went away, and I, too, determined to take myself off. I shall only stay a couple of days with you, so pray tell Mrs. St. Julian that I shall not, I hope, be much in her way. Do not let her make any changes for me; I shall be quite willing to live exactly

as you are all in the habit of doing. Any room will do for my man. The maid need only have a little room next to mine. You won't mind, I know, if I go my own gait while I stay with you, for I am an odd creature, as I dare say you may have often heard from Bevis. I expect to feel dreadfully small with all of you clever artistic people, but I shall be safe from my lady and Clem, who would never venture to come near you.

"My father is all alone at home, and I want to get back to him if I can steal a march on my lady. She is so jealous that she will not let me be alone with him for one hour if she can help it, in her absence. Before she left Castlerookham she sent for that odious sister of hers to play picquet with him, and there was a general scene when I objected. My father took part against me, so I started off in a huff, but he has managed to shake off the old wretch, I hear, and so I do not mind going back. I must say it is very pleasant to have a few halfpence that one can call one's own, and to be able to come and go one's own way. I assure you that the said halfpence do not last for ever, however. Clem took 50*l.* to pay her milliner's bill, and Bevis borrowed 100*l.* before he left, but I dare say he will pay me back.

"So good-by, my dear Emilia, for the present.

"Yours ever,

"JANE BEVERLEY."

Mrs. St. Julian did not offer to show Lady Jane's letter to St. Julian, but folded it up with a little suppressed smile. "I think she must be a character, Emmy," she said. "I dare say she will be very hap-

with us. Queenie (to me), "will you see what can be done to make Lady Jane comfortable?" and there was an end of the matter. Lord Ulleskelf went and sat out in the verandah with the others until the storm burst which had been gathering, through which he insisted on hurrying home, notwithstanding all they could say to detain him.

We had expected Lady Jane by the boat which brought our other guest the next day, but only Mr. Hexham's dark close-cropped head appeared out of the carriage which had been sent to meet them. The coachman declared there was no lady alone on board. Emilia wondered why her sister-in-law had failed: the others took Lady Jane's absence very calmly, and after some five o'clock tea St. Julian proposed a walk.

"Perhaps I had better stay at home," Mrs. Beverley said to her mother.

"No, my dear, your father will be disappointed. She cannot come now," said Mrs. St. Julian, decidedly; "and if she does, I am here to receive her. Mr. Hexham, you did not see her on board? A lady alone? . . ."

No. Hexham had not seen any lone lady on board. There was a good-looking person who might have answered the description, but she had a gentleman with her. He lost sight of them at Tarmouth, as he was looking after his man, and his van, and his photographic apparatus. It was settled Lady Jane could not possibly come till next day.

II.

Lady Jane Beverley had always declared that she hated three things—*islands*, *clever people*, and *interference*. She knew she was *clever*, but she did not encourage this disposition. It made people bores and radical in her own class of life, and forward if they were low. She was not pretty. No; she didn't care for beauty, though she confessed she should be very sorry if she was not able to afford to dress in the last fashion. It was all very well for artists and such people to say the contrary, but she knew that a plain woman well dressed would look better than the loveliest dowdy that ever tied her bonnet-strings crooked. It was true her brother Bevis had thought otherwise. He had married Emilia, who was not in his own rank of life; but Lady Jane supposed he had taught her to dress properly after her marriage. She had done her very best to dissuade him from that crazy step: once it was over she made the best of it, though none of them would listen to her; and indeed she had twice had to lend him sums of money when his father stopped his allowance. It is true he paid her back, otherwise she really did not know how she could have paid her bills that quarter. If she had not had her own independence she scarcely could have got on at all or borne with all Lady Mountmore's whims. However, thanks to old aunt Adelaide, she need not think of anybody but herself, and that was a very great comfort to her in her many vexations. As it was, Clem was for ever riding Bazook, and laming her ponies, and

borrowing money. Beverley and Bevis, of course, being her own brothers, had a right to expect she would be ready to lend them a little now and then; but really Clem was only her step-sister, and considering the terms she and Lady Mountmore were on . . . Lady Jane had a way of rambling on, though she was a young woman still, not more than six or seven and twenty. It was quite true that she had had to fight her own battles at home, or she would have been utterly fleeced and set aside. Lord Beverley, her eldest brother, never quite forgave her for being the old aunt's heiress, and did not help her as he should have done. Bevis was always away on his missions or in disgrace. Old Lord Mountmore was feeble and almost childish. Lady Mountmore was not a pleasant person to deal with, and such heart as she possessed was naturally given to Lady Clem, her own child.

Lady Jane was fortunately not of a sensitive disposition. She took life calmly, and did not yearn for the affection that was not there to get, but she made the best of things, and when Bevis was sent to South America on a mission, she it was who brought about a sort of general reconciliation. She was very much pleased with herself on this occasion. Everybody looked to her, and consulted her. "You will go and see Emmy sometimes, won't you, Jane?" said poor Bevis, who was a kind and handsome young fellow. Lady Jane said, "Most likely," and congratulated herself on her own tact and success on this occasion, as well as on her general ways, looks, style, and position in life. She thought poor Emmy was not certainly worth all this fuss, but determined to look after her. Lady Jane was rather Low Church, slightly suspicious,

but good-natured and not unamenable to reason. She cultivated an abrupt frankness and independence of manner. Her frankness was almost bewildering at times, as Lady Jane expected her dictums to be received in silence and humility by the unlucky victims of her penetration. But still, as I have said, being a true-hearted woman, if she was once convinced that she was in the wrong, she would always own to it. Marriage was rather a sore subject with this lady. She had once notified to a young evangelical rector that although his prospects were not brilliant, yet she was not indisposed to share them, if he liked to come forward. To her utter amazement, the young man got up in a confused manner, walked across the room, talked to Lady Clem for the rest of his visit, and never called again. Lady Jane was much surprised; but, as her heart was not deeply concerned in the matter, she forgave him on deliberation. The one softness in this strange woman's nature lay in her love for children. Little Bevis, her brother's baby, would coo at her, and beat her high cheek-bones with his soft little fat hand, she let him pull her hair, the curls, and frills, and plaits of an hour's erection, poke his fingers into her eyes, swing her watch violently round and round. She was still too young to have crystallised into a regular old maid. She had never known any love in her life except from Bevis, but Bevis had been a little afraid of her. Beverley was utterly indifferent to anybody but himself.

Lady Jane had fifteen hundred a year of her own. She was not at all bad-looking. Her thick reddish hair was of the fashionable colour. She was a better woman than some people gave her credit for being,

seeing this tall over-dressed and over-bearing young person going about the world with her two startled attendants and her hunters. Lady Jane had not the smallest sense of humour or feeling for art: at least, this latter faculty had never been cultivated, though she had furnished her boudoir with bran new damask and sprawling gilt legs, and dressed herself in the same style; and had had her picture taken by some travelling artist—a pastille all frame and rose-coloured chalk—which hung up over her chimney, smirking at a rose, to the amusement of some of her visitors. Lady Jane's notion of artists and art was mainly formed upon this trophy, and by what she had seen of the artist who had produced it. Lady Clem used to say that Jane was a born old maid, and would never marry; but everybody was not of that opinion. Lady Jane had been made a great deal of at Scudamore Castle, especially by a certain Captain Sigourney, who had been staying there, a nephew of Lady Scudamore's, —tall, dark, interesting, in want of money, notwithstanding his many accomplishments. Poor Tom Sigourney had been for many years a hanger-on at Scudamore. They were extremely tired of him, knew his words, looks, tones by heart. Handsome as he undoubtedly was, there was something indescribably wearisome about him after the first introduction—a certain gentle drawl and prose that irritated some people. But Lady Jane was immensely taken by him. His deference pleased her. She was not insensible to the respectful flattery with which he listened to every word she spoke. Tom Sigourney said she was a fine spirited girl, and Lady Scudamore seized the happy occasion—urged Tom forward, made much of Lady Jane. “Poor girl!

she needs a protector," said Lady Scudamore gravely to her daughters. At which the young ladies burst out laughing. "Can you fancy Tom Sigourney taking care of anybody?" they cried.

Lady Mountmore arrived unexpectedly, and the whole little fabric was destroyed. Sigourney, who had not much impudence, was driven off the field by the elder lady's impertinences. Lady Jane was indignant, and declared she should not stay any longer under the same roof as her step-mother. Lady Scudamore did not press her to remain. She had not time to attend to her any longer or to family dissensions; but she did write a few words to Tom, telling him of Lady Jane's movements, and then made it up with Lady Mountmore all the more cordially that she felt she had not been quite loyal to her in sending off this little missive.

The little steamer starts for Tarmouth in a crowd and excitement of rolling barrels and oxen driven and plunging sheep in barges. The people come and look over the side of the wooden pier and talk to the captain at his wheel. Afternoon rays stream slant, and the island glistens across the straits, and the rocks stand out in the water; limpid waters beat against the rocks, and toss the buoys and splash against the busy little tug; one or two coal-barges make way. Idlers and a child or two in the way of the half-dozen passengers are called upon by name to stand aside on this occasion. There are two country dames returning from market; friend Hexham in an excitement about his van, which is to follow in a barge; and there languid dark handsome gentleman talking to a

dressed lady whose attendants have been piling up wraps and "Times" and dressing-cases and umbrellas.

"Let me hold this for you, it will tire you," said the gentleman, tenderly taking "The Times" out of her hand; "are you resting? I thought I would try and meet you, and see if I could save you from fatigue. My aunt Scudamore told me you were coming this way. There, that is where my people live; that white house among the trees."

"It is a nice place," said Lady Jane.

The rocks were coming nearer, and the island was brightening to life and colour, and the quaint old bricks and terraces of Tarmouth were beginning to show. There was a great ship in the distance sliding out to sea, and a couple of gulls flew overhead.

"Before I retired from the service," said Sigourney, "I was quartered at Portsmouth. I knew this coast well; that is Tarmouth opposite, and that is—ah, 'm—a pretty place, and an uncommon pretty girl at the hotel."

"How am I to get to these people if they have not sent to meet me, I wonder?" interrupted Lady Jane, rather absently.

"Leave that to me," said Captain Sigourney; "I am perfectly at home here, and I will order a fly. They all know me, and if they are not engaged they will always come for *me*. You go to the inn. I order you a cup of tea, and one for your maid. I see a fast horse put up into a trap, and start you straight off."

"Oh, Captain Sigourney, I am very much obliged," said Lady Jane; and so the artless conversation went on.

At Tarmouth the ingenious captain would not let her ask whose was a carriage she saw standing there, nor take one of the two usual flies in waiting, but he made her turn into the inn until a special fast horse, with whose paces he was well acquainted, could be harnessed. This took a long time; but Lady Jane, excited by the novelty of the adventure, calmly enjoyed her afternoon tea and devotion, and sat on the horse-hair sofa of the little inn, admiring the stuffed carp and cuttle-fish on the walls, and listening with a charmed ear to Tom's reminiscences of the time when he was quartered at Portsmouth.

The fast horse did not go much quicker than his predecessors, and Lady Jane arrived at the Lodges about an hour after Hexham, and at the same time as his great photographic van.

III.

They were all strolling along the cliffs towards the beacon. It stood upon the summit of High Down, a long way off as yet, though it seemed close at hand, so clearly did it stand out in the still atmosphere of the sunset. It stood there stiff and black upon its knoll, an old weather-beaten stick with a creaking coop for a crown, the pivot round which most of this little story turns. For when these holiday people travelled away out of its reach, they also passed out of my ken. We could see the beacon from most of our windows, through all the autumnal clematis and ivy sprays falling and drifting about. The children loved the beacon, and their little lives were one per-

petual struggle to reach it, in despite of winds, of time of meals, of tutors and lessons. The elders, too, loved it after their fashion. Had they not come and established themselves under the shadow of High Down, where it had stood as long as the oldest inhabitant could remember! Lord Ulleskelf, in his yacht out at sea, was always glad to see the familiar old stubby finger rising up out of the mist. My cousin, St. Julian the R.A., had made a strange rough sketch of it, and of his wife and her eldest daughter sitting beneath it; and a sea, and a cloud horizon, grey, green, mysterious beyond. He had painted a drapery over their heads, and young Emilia's arms round the stem. It was a terrible little picture Emilia the mother thought when she saw it, and she begged her husband to turn its face to the wall in his studio.

"Don't you see how limpid the water is, and how the mist is transparent and drifting before the wind?" St. Julian said. "Why do you object, you perverse woman?"

The wife didn't answer, but her soft cheeks flushed. Emilia the daughter spoke, a little frightened.

"They are like mourners, papa," she whispered.

St. Julian shrugged his shoulders at them. "And this is a painter's wife!" he cried; "and a painter's daughter!" But he put the picture away, for he was too tender to pain them, and it lay now forgotten in a closet. This was two years ago, before Emilia was married, or had come home with her little son during her husband's absence. She was carrying the child in her arms as she toiled up the hill in company with the others, a tender bright flush in her face. Her little Bevis thinks it is he who is carrying "Mozzer,"

as he clutches her tight round the neck with his two little arms.

I suppose nobody ever reached the top of a high cliff without some momentary feeling of elation,—so much left behind, so much achieved. There you stand at peace, glowing with exertion, raised far above the din of the world. They were gazing as they came along (for it is only of an island that I am writing) at the great sight of shining waters, of smiling fertile fields and country; and of distant waters again, that separated them from the pale glimmering coast of the mainland. The straits, which lie between the island and Broadshire, are not deserted as is the horizon on the other side (it lies calm, and tossing, and self-sufficing); but the straits are crowded and alive with boats and white sails: ships go sliding past, yachts drift, and great brigs slowly travel in tow of the tiny steamer that crosses and recrosses the water with letters and provisions, and comers and goers and guests to Ulles Hall and to the Lodges, where St. Julian and his family live all through the summer-time; and where some of us indeed remain the whole year round.

The little procession comes winding up the down, Lord Ulleskelf and the painter walking first, in broad-brimmed hats and coats fashioned in the island, of a somewhat looser and more comfortable cut than London coats. The tutor is with them. Mr. Hexham, too, is with them; as I can see, a little puzzled by the ways of us islanders.

As St. Julian talks his eyes flash, and he puts out one hand to emphasize what he is saying. He is not calm and self-contained as one might imagine so great

a painter, but a man of strong convictions, alive to every life about him and to every event. His cordial heart and bright artistic nature are quickly touched and moved. He believes in his own genius, grasps at life as it passes and translates it into a strange quaint revelation of his own, and brings others into his way of seeing things almost by magic. But his charm is almost irresistible, and he knows it, and likes to know it. The time that he is best himself is when he is at his painting; his brown eyes are alight in his pale face, his thick grey hair stands on end; he is a middle-aged man, broad, firmly-knit with a curly grey beard, active, mighty in his kingdom. He lets people in to his sacred temple; but he makes them put their shoes off, so to speak, and will allow no word of criticism except from one or two. In a moment his thick brows knit, and the master turns upon the unlucky victim.

The old tutor had a special and unlucky knack of exciting St. Julian's ire. He teaches the boys as he taught St. Julian in bygone days, but he cannot forget that he is not always St. Julian's tutor, and constantly stings and irritates him with his caustic disappointed old wits. But St. Julian bears it all with admirable impatience for the sake of old days and of age and misfortune.

As they all climb the hill together on this special day, the fathers go walking first, then comes a pretty rout of maidens and children, and Hexham's tall dark head among them. Little Missie goes wandering by the edge of the cliff, with her long gleaming locks hanging in ripples not unlike those of the sea. The two elder girls had come out with some bright-coloured

scarves tied round their necks; but finding them oppressive, they had pulled them off, and given them to the boys to carry. These scarves were now banners streaming in the air as the boys attacked a tumulus, where the peaceful bones of the bygone Danish invaders were lying buried. The gay young voices echo across the heather calling to each other.

Hester comes last with Mrs. William—Hester with the mysterious sweet eyes and crown of soft hair. It is not very thick, but like a dark yet gleaming cloud about her pretty head. She is quite pale, but her lips are bright carnation red, and when she smiles she blushes. Hester is tall, as are all her sisters. Aileen is walking a little ahead with Mrs. William's children, and driving them away from the edge of the cliff, towards which these little moths seem perpetually buzzing.

The sun begins to set in a strange wild glory, and the light to flow along the heights; all these people look to one another like beatified men and women. Ulleskelf and St. Julian cease their discussion at last, and stand looking seawards.

"Look at that band of fire on the sea," said Lord Ulleskelf.


"What a wonderful evening," said St. Julian. "Hester, are you there?"

Hester was there, with sweet, wondering, sunset eyes. Her father put his hand fondly on her shoulder. There was a sympathy between the two which was very touching; they liked to admire together, to praise together. In sorrow or trouble St. Julian looked for his wife, in happiness he instinctively seemed to turn to his favourite daughter.

Hester's charm did not always strike people at first sight. She was like some of those sweet simple tunes which haunt you after you have heard them, or like some of those flowers of which the faint delicate scent only comes to you when you have waited for an instant.

Hexham, for instance, until now had admired Mrs. Beverley infinitely more than he did her sister. He thought Miss St. Julian handsome certainly, but charmless; whereas the sweet, gentle young mother, whose wistful eyes seemed looking beyond the sunset, and trying in vain to reach the distant world where her husband would presently see it rise, appealed to every manly feeling in his nature. But as the father and daughter turned to each other, something in the girl's face—a dim reflex light from the pure bright soul within—seemed to touch him, to disclose a something, I cannot tell you what. It seemed to Hexham as if the scales had fallen suddenly from his eyes, and as if in that instant Hester was revealed to him. She moved on a little way with two of the children who had joined her. The young man followed her with his eyes, and almost started when some one spoke to him. . .

As St. Julian walked on, he began mechanically to turn over possible effects and combinations in his mind. The great colourist understood better than any other, how to lay his colours, luminous, harmonious, shining with the real light of nature, for they were in conformity to her laws; and suddenly he spoke, turning to Hexham, who was a photographer, as I have said, and who indeed was now travelling gipsy fashion, in search of subjects for his camera. . .



"In many things," he said, "my art can equal yours, but how helpless we both are when we look at such scenes as these. It makes me sometimes mad to think that I am only a man with oil-pots attempting to reproduce such wonders."

"Fortunately they will reproduce themselves whether you succeed or not," said the tutor. St. Julian looked at him with his bright eyes. The old man had spoken quite simply, he did not mean to be rude,—and the painter was silent.

"My art is 'a game half of skill, half of chance,'" said Hexham. "When both these divinities favour me I shall begin to think myself repaid for the time and the money and the chemicals I have wasted."

"Have you ever tried to photograph figures in a full blaze of light?" Lord Ulleskelf asked, looking at Aileen, who was standing with some of the children by Hester. They were shading their eyes from a bright stream that was playing like a halo about their heads. There was something unconscious and lovely in the little group, with their white draperies and flowing locks. A bunch of illumined berries and trailing creepers hung from little Susan's hair: the light of youth and of life, the sweet wondering eyes, all went to make a more beautiful picture than graces or models could ever attain to. St. Julian looked and smiled with Lord Ulleskelf.

Hexham answered, a little distractedly, that he should like to show Lord Ulleskelf the attempt he had once made. "Nature is a very uncertain sort of assistant," he added; "and I, too, might exclaim, 'Oh, that I am but a man, with a bit of yellow paper

across my window, and a row of bottles on a shelf, trying to evoke life from the film upon my glasses!"

"I think you are all of you talking very profanely," said Lord Ulleskelf, "before all these children, and in such a sight as this. But I shall be very glad to come down and look at your photographs, Mr. Hexham, to-morrow morning," he added, fearing the young man might be hurt by his tone.

The firebrand in the still rippled sea turned from flame to silver as the light changed and ebbed. The light on the sea seemed dimmer, but then the land caught fire in turn, and trees and downs and distant roof-tops blazed in this great illumination, and the shadows fell black upon the turf.

Here Mrs. William began complaining in a plaintive tone of voice that she was tired, and I offered to go back with her. Everybody indeed was on the move, but we two took a shorter cut, while the others went home with Lord Ulleskelf, turning down by a turn of the down towards the lane that leads to Ulles Hall.

And so, having climbed up with some toil and effort to that beautiful height, we all began to descend once more into the everyday of life, and turn from glowing seas and calm sailing clouds to the thought of cutlets and chickens. The girls had taken back their scarves and were running down hill. Aileen was carrying one of Mrs. William's children, Emilia had her little Bevis in her arms, Hester was holding by her father's arm as they came back rather silent, but satisfied and happy. The sounds from the village below began to reach us, and the lights in the cottages and houses to twinkle; the cliffs rose higher and

higher as we descended our different ways. The old beacon stood out black against the ruddy sky: a moon began to hang in the high faint heaven, and a bright star to pierce through the daylight.

Ulles Hall stands on the way from Tarmouth to the Lodges: it is a lovely old house standing among woods in a hollow, and blown by sea-breezes that come through pine-stems and sweet green glades, starred with primroses in spring, and sprinkled with russet leaves in autumn. The Lodges where St. Julian lives are built a mile nearer to the sea. Houses built on the roadside, but inclosed by tall banks and hedges, and with long green gardens running to the down. They have been built piece by piece. It would be difficult to describe them: a gable here, a wooden gallery thatched, a window twinkling in a bed of ivy, hanging creepers, clematis and loveliest Virginian sprays reddening and drinking in the western light and reflecting it undimmed in their beautiful scarlet veins—scarlet gold melting into green: one of the rooms streams with light like light through stained windows of a church.*

* A little child passing by in the road looked up one day at the Lodges, and said, "Oh, what pretty leaf houses! Oh, mother, do let us live there, I think the robins must have made them." "I think that is where we are going to, Missie," said the mother. She was a poor young widowed cousin of St. Julian's. She came for a time, but they took her in and never let her go again out of the leaf house. She stayed and became a sort of friend, chaperone, governess, and housekeeper of these kind and tender-friends and relations; if she were to attempt to set down here all that she owes to them, to their warm, cordial hearts, and bright, sweet natures, it would make a story apart from the one she has in her mind to write to-day.

IV.

As I reached the door with Mrs. William, I saw a bustle of some sort, a fly, some boxes, a man, a *maid*, a tall lady of about seven or eight and twenty, dressed in the very height of fashion, with a very tall hat and feather, whom I guessed at once to be Lady Jane. Mrs. William, who has not the good manners of the rest of the family, shrunk back a little, saying,—“I really cannot face her: it’s that Lady Jane;” but at that moment Lady Jane, who was talking in a loud querulous tone, suddenly ceased, and turned round.

“Here is Mrs. St. Julian,” said the fly-man; “she always give somethin’ for the driver;” and my dear mistress came out into the garden to receive her guest.

“I am so glad you have come,” I heard her say quietly; “we had given you up—are you tired? Come in. Let the servant see to your luggage.” She put out her white gentle hand, and I was amused to see Lady Jane’s undisguised look of surprise: she had expected to meet with some bustling, good-humoured housekeeper. Bevis had always praised his mother-in-law to her, but Lady Jane had a way of not always listening to what people said, as she rambled on in her own fashion: and now, having fully made up her mind as to the sort of person Mrs. St. Julian would be, Lady Jane felt slightly aggrieved at her utter dissimilarity to her preconceptions. She followed her into the house, with her high hat stuck upon the top of her tall head, walking in a slightly defiant manner.

"I thought Emilia would have been here to receive me," said Lady Jane, not over pleased.

"I sent her out," the mother said. "I thought you would let me be your hostess for an hour. Will you come up into my room?"

Mrs. St. Julian led the way into the drawing-room, where Lady Jane sank down into a chair, crossing her topboots and shaking out her skirts.

"I am afraid there was a mistake about meeting you," said the hostess; "the carriage went, but only brought back Mr. Hexham and a message that you were not there."

"I fortunately met a friend on board," said Lady Jane, hurriedly. "He got me a fly; thank you, it did not signify."

Lady Jane was not anxious to enter into particulars, and when Mrs. St. Julian went on to ask how it was she had had to wait so long, the young lady abruptly said something about afternoon tea, asked to see her room and to speak to her maid.

"Will you come back to me when you have given your orders?" said Mrs. St. Julian. "My cousin, Mrs. Campbell, will show you the way."

Lady Jane, with a haughty nod to poor Mrs. Campbell, followed with her high head up the quaint wooden stairs along the gallery, with its odd windows and slits, and china, and ornaments.

"This is your room; I hope you will find it comfortable," said the housekeeper, opening a door, through which came a flood of light.

"Is that for my maid?" asked Lady Jane, pointing to a large and very comfortably furnished room just opposite to her own door.

"That room is Mr. Hexham's," said Mrs. Campbell; "your maid's room leads out of your dressing-room." The arrangement seemed obvious, but Lady Jane was not quite in a temper to be pleased.

"Is it comfortable, Pritchard? Shall you be able to work there? I must speak about it if you are not comfortable."

Pritchard was a person who did not like to commit herself. Not that she wished to complain, but she should prefer her ladyship to judge; it was not for her to say. She looked so mysterious that Lady Jane ran up the little winding stair that led to the turret, and found a little white curtained chamber, with a pleasant, bright look-out over land and sea.

"Why, this is a delightful room, Pritchard," said Lady Jane. "I should like it myself; it is most comfortable."

"Yes, my lady, I thought it was highly comfortable," said Pritchard; "but it was not for me to venture to say so."

Lady Jane was a little afraid of Mrs. St. Julian's questionings. To tell the truth, she felt that she had been somewhat imprudent; and though she was a person of mature age and independence, yet she was not willing to resign entirely all pretensions to youthful dependence, and she was determined if possible not to mention Sigourney's name to her entertainers. Having frizzed up her curling red locks, with Mrs. Pritchard's assistance, shaken out her short skirts, added a few more bracelets, tied on a coroneted locket, and girded in her tight silver waistband, she prepared to return to her hostess and her tea. She felt excessively ill-used by Emilia's absence, but, as I have said,

dared not complain for fear of more questions as to the cause of her delay.

All along the passage were more odds and ends, paintings, pictures, sketches framed, a cabinet or two full of china. Lady Jane was too much used to the ways of the world to mistake the real merit of this heterogeneous collection; but she supposed that the artists made the things up, or perhaps sold them again to advantage, and that there was some meaning which would be presently explained for it all. What most impressed Lady Jane with a feeling of respect for the inhabitants of the house was a huge Scotch sheep-dog, who came slowly down the gallery to meet her, and, then passed on with a snuff and a wag of his tail.

The door of the mistress's room, as it was called, was open; and as Lady Jane followed her conductress in, she found a second five-o'clock tea and a table spread with rolls and country butter and home-made cake. A stream of western light was flowing through the room and out into the gallery beyond, where the old majolica plates flashed in the glitter of its sparkle. The mistress herself was standing with her back turned, looking out through the window across the sea, and trying to compose herself before she asked a question she had very near at heart.

Lady Jane remained waiting, feeling for once a little shy, and not knowing exactly what to do next, for Mrs. Campbell, who was not without a certain amount of feminine malice, stood meekly until Lady Jane should take the lead. The young lady was not accustomed to deal with inferiors who did not exactly behave as such, and though inwardly indignant, she did not quite know how to resent the indifference with

which she considered she was treated. She tossed her head, and at last said, not in the most conciliatory voice, "I suppose I may take some tea, Mrs. St. Julian?" The sight of the sweet pale face turning round at her question softened her tone. Mrs. St. Julian came slowly forward, and began to push a chair with her white feeble hands, evidently so unfit for such work that Jane, who was kind-hearted, sprang forward, lockets, top boots, and all, to prevent her. "You had much better sit down yourself," said she, good-naturedly. "I thought you looked ill just now, though I had never seen you in my life before. Let me pour out the tea."

Mrs. St. Julian softened, too, in the other's unexpected heartiness and kindness. "I had something to say to you. I think it upset me a little. I heard—I feared"—she said, nervously hesitating. "Lady Jane, did you hear from your brother—from Bevis—by the last mail? . . . Emmy does not know the mail is in. . . . I have been a little anxious for her," and Mrs. St. Julian changed colour.

"Certainly I heard," said Lady Jane; "or at least my father did. Bevis wanted some money raised. Why were you so anxious, Mrs. St. Julian?" asked Lady Jane, with a slightly amused look in her face. It was really too absurd to have these people making scenes and alarms when she was perfectly at her ease.

"I am thankful you have heard," said Mrs. St. Julian, with a sudden flush and brightness in her wan face, which made Lady Jane open her eyes in wonder.

"Do you care so much?" said she, a little puzzled. "I am glad that I do not belong to an anxious family. I am very like Bevis, they say; and I know there is

nothing that he dislikes so much as a fuss about nothing."

"I know it," said Mrs. St. Julian. "He is very good and kind to bear with my foolish alarms; and I wonder,—could you,—would you too,—forgive me for my foolishness, Lady Jane, if I were to ask you a great favour? Do you think I might see that letter to your father? I cannot tell you what a relief it would be to me. I told you Emilia does not know that the mail is in; and if—if she might learn it by seeing in his own handwriting that Bevis was well, I think it would make all the difference to her, poor child."

There was something in the elder lady's gentle persistence which struck the young one as odd, and yet touching; and although she was much inclined to refuse, from a usual habit of contradiction, she did not know how to do so when it came to the point.

"I'll write to my father," said Lady Jane, with a little laugh. "I have no doubt he will let you see the letter since you wish it so much."

"Thank you, my dear," said Mrs. Julian, "and for the good news you have given me; and I will now confess to you," she added, smiling, "that I sent Emmy out on purpose that I might have this little talk. Are you rested? Will you come into the garden with me for a little?"

Lady Jane was touched by the sweet maternal manner of the elder woman, and followed quite meekly and kindly. As the two ladies were pacing the garden-walk they were joined by the housekeeper and by Mrs. William, with her little dribble of small talk.

Many of the windows of the Lodges were alight. The light from without still painted the creepers, the

lights from within were coming and going, and the gleams were falling upon the ivy-leaves here and there. One-half of the place was in shadow, and the western side in daylight still. There was a sweet rush of scent from the sweet-briars and clematis. It seemed to hang in the still evening air. Underneath the hedges, bright-coloured flowers seemed suddenly starting out of the twilight, while above, in the lingering daylight, the red berries sparkled and caught the stray limpid rays. There was a sound of sea-waves washing the not distant beach; a fisherman or two, and soldiers from the little fort, were strolling along the road, and peering in as they passed the bright little homes. The doors were wide open, and now and then a figure passed, a servant, Mrs. Campbell, who was always coming and going; William, the eldest son, leaving the house; he had been at work all day.

The walking-party came up so silently that they were there in the garden almost before the others had heard them: a beloved crowd, exclaiming, dispersing again. It was a pretty sight to see the meetings: little Susan running straight to her father, William St. Julian. He adored his little round-eyed daughter, and immediately carried her off in his arms. Little Missie, too, got hold of her mother's hand, while Lady Jane was admiring Bevis, and being greeted by the rest of the party, and introduced to those whom she did not already know.

"We had quite given you up, dear Jane," said Emilia, wistfully gazing and trying to see some look of big Bevis in his sister's face. "How I wish I had stayed; but you had mamma."

"We gave you up," said Hester, "when Mr. Hexham came without you . . ."

"I now find I had the honour of travelling with Lady Jane," said Hexham, looking amused, and making a little bow.

Lady Jane turned her back upon Mr. Hexham. She had taken a great dislike to him on board the boat; she had noticed him looking at her once or twice, and at Captain Sigourney. She found it a very good plan and always turned her back upon people she did not like. It checked any familiarity. It was much better to do so at once, and let them see what their proper place was. If people of a certain position in the world did not keep others in their proper places, there was no knowing what familiarity might not ensue. And then she ran back to little Bevis again, and lifted him up, struggling. Bevis would gladly have turned his back if he could.

"Lady Jane Beverley has something military about her," said Hexham to Mrs. Campbell.

As he spoke a great loud bell began to ring, and with a gentle chorus of exclamations, the ladies began to disperse to dress for dinner.

"You know your way, Mr. Hexham," said Mrs. Campbell, pointing. "Go through that side-door, and straight up and along the gallery."

Mrs. St. Julian had put her arm into her husband's, and walked a little way with him towards the house.

"Henry," she said, "thank heaven, all is well. Lord Mountmore heard from his son by this mail. Lady Jane has promised to show me the letter: she had heard nothing of that dreadful report."

"It was not likely," St. Julian said; "Ulleskelf only saw the paper by chance. I am glad you were so discreet, my dear."

"I should like to make a picture of them," said Hexham to the housekeeper, looking back once more before he hurried into the house.

The two were standing at the threshold of their home, Mrs. Julian leaning upon her husband's arm: the strong keen-faced man with his bright gallant bearing, and the wife with her soft and feminine looks fixed upon him as she bent anxiously to catch his glance. She was as tall as he was: for St. Julian was a middle-sized man, and Mrs. St. Julian was tall for a woman.

Meanwhile Hexham, who was not familiar with the ways of the house, and who took time at his toilet, ran upstairs, hastily passed his own door, went along a passage, up a staircase, down a staircase. . . He found himself in the dusky garden again, where the lights were almost put out by this time, though all the flowers were glimmering, and scenting, and awake still. There was a red streak in the sky; all the people had vanished, but turning round he saw—he blinked his eyes at the sight—a white figure standing, visionary, mystical, in the very centre of a bed of tall lilies, in a soft gloom of evening light. Was it a vision? For the first time in his life Hexham felt a little strangely; and as if he could believe in the super-nature which he sometimes had scoffed at, the young man made one step forward and stopped again. "It is I, Mr. Hexham," said a shy clear voice. "I came to find some flowers for Emilia." It was Hester's voice. Surely some kindly providence sets true lovers' way in plea-

sant places; and all they do and say has a grace of its own which they impart to all inanimate things. The evening, the sweet stillness, the trembling garden hedges, the fields beyond, the sweet girlish *tinkle* of Hester's voice, made Hexham feel for the first time in his life as if he was standing in a living shrine, and as if he ought to fall down on his knees and worship.

"Can I help you?" he said. "Miss Hester, may I have a flower for my button-hole?"

"There are nothing but big lilies," said the voice.

PART II.

V.

IN writing this little episode I have tried to put together one thing and another—to describe some scenes that I saw myself, and some that were described to me. My window looks out upon the garden, and is just over the great bed of lilies. I shut it down, and began to dress for dinner, with a dim feeling already of what the future might have in store, and a half-conscious consciousness of what was passing in the minds of the people all about.

For some days past Mrs. St. Julian's anxious face had seemed to follow me about the room. Emilia, Hexham, Hester, even Lady Jane, each seemed to strike a note, in my present excited and receptive state of mind. It is one for which there is no name, but which few people have not experienced. I dressed quickly, the dark corners of my room seemed looming at me, and it was with an odd anxious conviction of disturbance at hand that I hurried down along the gallery to the drawing-room, where we assembled before dinner. On my way I met Emilia on the stairs, in her white dinner dress, with a soft white knitted shawl drawn closely round her. She slid her little chill hand through my arm, and asked me why I

looked so pale. Dear soft little woman, she seemed of us all the most tender and disarming. Even sorrow and desolation, I thought, should be vanquished by her sweetness. And perhaps I was right when I thought so.

We were not the last. Hester followed us. She was dressed in a floating gauze dress, and she had one great white lily in her dark hair. "It is a great deal too big, Hester," cried Mrs. William; but I thought I had never seen her more charming.

"How much better mamma is looking," Hester said that evening at dinner, and as she spoke she glanced at her mother sitting at the head of the long table in the tall carved chair.

When the party was large, and the sons of the house at home, we dined in an old disused studio of St. Julian's: a great wooden room, unpapered and raftered, with a tressel-table of the painter's designing, and half-finished frescos and sketches hanging upon the walls. There was a high wooden chimney and an old-fashioned glass reflecting the scene, the table, the people, the crimson drugget, of which a square covered the boards. In everything St. Julian touched there was a broad quaint stamp of his own, and his room had been inhabited and altered by him. Two rough hanging lamps from the rafter lit up the long white table, and the cups of red berries and green leaves with which I had attempted to dress it. There was something almost patriarchal in this little assembly: the father at the end of the table, the sons and daughters all round. William and his wife by Mrs. St. Julian, and pretty Hester sitting by her father. Lady Jane was established at her other hand. St. Julian

had taken her in. He had asked her a few questions at first, specially about the letter she had received from Bevis, but carefully, so that Emilia should not overhear them.

"He seemed to be enjoying himself," said Lady Jane. "He was talking of going on a shooting-party a little way up the river if he could get through his work in time."

She did not notice St. Julian's grave look as she spoke, and went on in her usual fashion. I remember she was giving him one person's views on art and another's, and her own, and describing the pastille she had had done. St. Julian looked graver and graver, and more impatient as she went on. Patience was not his strong point.

"How long does it take you to paint a picture, Mr. St. Julian?" Lady Jane asked. "I wish I could paint, and I'm sure I wish Beverley could, for he cannot manage upon his allowance at all. How nice it must be to take up a brush and—paint cheques, in fact, as you do. Clem can sketch wonderfully quickly; she took off Lord Scudamore capitally. Of course she would not choose to sketch for money, but artists have said they would gladly offer large sums for her paintings. Do your daughters help you?" enquired poor Lady Jane, affably feeling that she was suiting her conversation to her company. "Do you ever do caricatures?"

"We will talk about painting, Lady Jane, when you have been here some days longer," said St. Julian. "You had better ask the girls any questions you may wish to have answered, and get them, if possible, to give you some idea of the world we live in."

To poor Lady Jane's utter amazement, St. Julian then began talking to Hexham across the table, and signed to his wife to move immediately after dinner was over. We all went back walking across the garden to the drawing-room, for the night was fine, and the little covered way was for bad weather.

Some of us sat in the verandah. It was a bright starry evening. A great bright planet was rising from behind the sweeping down. The lights from the wooden room were shining too. Lady Jane presently seemed to get tired of listening to poor Mrs. William's nursery retrospections—Mary Annes, and Sarahs, and tea and sugar, and what Mrs. Mickleman had said when she parted from her nursery-maid; and what Mrs. William herself meant to say to the girl when she got home on Monday; not that Mrs. William was disposed to rely entirely upon Mrs. Mickleman, who was certainly given to exaggerate, &c. The girls were in the garden. Emilia had gone up to little Bevis. Lady Jane jumped up from her place, with the usual rattle of bracelets and necklaces, and said she should take a turn too, and join the young ladies in the garden.

Mrs. William confessed, as Lady Jane left the verandah, that she was glad she was not *her* sister-in-law.

"She has such a strange abrupt manner," said the poor lady. "Don't you find it very awkward, Queenie? I never know whether she likes me to talk to her or not—do you?"

"I have no doubt about it," I said, laughing.

The evening was irresistible: starlit, moonlit, soft-winded.

A few minutes later I, too, went out into the

garden, and walked along the dark alley towards the knoll, from whence there is a pretty view of the sea by night, and over the hedge and along the lane. From where I stood I saw that the garden-gate was open, for the moon was shining in a broad silver stream along the lane that led to the farm. The farm was not really ours, but all our supplies came from there, and we felt as if it belonged to us. Missie knew the cows and the horses, and the very sheep enclosed in their pen for the night. As I was standing peaceful and resting under the starlit dome, something a little strange and inexplicable happened, which I could not at all understand at the time. I saw some one moving in the lane beyond the hedge. I certainly recognised Lady Jane walking away in the shadow that lay along the banks of that moonlight stream; but what was curious to me was this: it seemed to me that she was not alone, that a dark tall figure of a man was beside her. It was not one of our men, though I could not see the face—of this I felt quite sure. The two went on a little way, then she turned; and I could have declared that I saw the gleam of his face in the distance through the shadow. Lady Jane's hand was hanging in the moonlight, and her trinkets glistening. Of her identity I had no doubt. There is a big tree which hangs over the road, and when they, or when she, reached it, she stopped for a moment, as if to look about her, and then, only Lady Jane appeared from its shadow—the other figure had vanished. I could not understand it at all. I have confessed that I am a foolish person, and superstitious at times. I had never seen poor Bevis. Had anything happened? Could it be a vision

of him that I had seen? I got a little frightened, and my heart began to beat. It was only for an instant that I was so absurd. I walked hastily towards the garden-door, and met Lady Jane only a few steps off, coming up very coolly.

"How lovely this moonlight is, Mrs. Campbell!" she cried, more affably than usual.

"Who was that with you? Didn't I see someone with you, Lady Jane?" I asked hurriedly.

Lady Jane looked me full in the face.

"What do you mean?" said she. "I went out for a stroll by myself. I am quite alone, as you see."

Something in her tone reassured me. I felt sure she was not speaking the truth. It was no apparition I had seen, but a real tangible person. It was no affair of mine, though it struck me as a singular proceeding. We both walked back to the house together. The girls' white dresses were gleaming here and there upon the lawn. Hexham passed us hastily and went on and joined them. William was taking a turn with his cigar. As we passed the dining-room window I happened to look in. St. Julian was sitting at the table, with his head resting on his hands, and beside him Mrs. St. Julian, who must have gone back to the room after dinner. A paper was before them, over which the two were bending.

We found no one in the drawing-room, and only a lamp spluttering and a tea-table simmering in one corner, and Mrs. William, who was half asleep on the sofa. "Don't let us stay indoors. Let us go back to the others," said Lady Jane.

What a night it was! Still, dark, sweet, fragrant shadows quivering upon the moon-stream; a sudden,

glowing, summer's night, coming like a gem set in the midst of grey days, of storms, swift gales, of falling autumnal leaves and seasons.

The clear three-quarter moon was hanging over the gables and roofs of the Lodges; the high stars streamed light; a distant sea burnt with pale radiance; the young folks chattered in the trembling gleams.

"Look at that great planet rising over the down," said Hexham. "Should you like that to be your star, Miss St. Julian?"

"I should like a fixed star," Hester answered, gravely. "I should like it to be quite still and unchanging, and to shine with an even light."

"That is not a bit like you, Hester," said William, who had come up, and who still had a schoolboy trick of teasing his sisters; "it is much more like Emilia, or my wife. You describe them, and take all the credit to yourself."

"Oh, William! Emilia is anything but a fixed star," cried Aileen. "She would like to jump out of her orbit to-morrow, and go off to Bevis, if she could. Margaret is certainly more like."

"You shall have the whole earth for your planet, Miss Hester," said Hexham. Then he added less seriously, "They say it looks very bright a little way off."

Moonlight gives a strange, intensified meaning to voices as well as to shadows. No one spoke for a minute, until Lady Jane, who was easily bored, jumped up, and said that people ought to be ashamed to talk about stars now-a-days, so much had been said already; and that, after all, she should go back for some tea.

I left her stirring her cup, with Mrs. William still half asleep in her corner, and I myself went up to my room. Mrs. St. Julian was sitting with her husband in the studio, the parlour-maid told me. Outside was the great burning night, inside a silent house, dark, with empty chambers and doors wide open on the dim staircase and passages. I would gladly have stayed out with the others, but I had a week's accounts to overlook on this Saturday night. The odd anxiety I had felt before dinner came back to me again now that I was alone. I tried to shake off the feeling which oppressed me, and I went in and stood for a moment by my little girl's bedside. Her sweet face, her quiet breath, and peaceful dreams seemed to me to belong to the stars outside. As I looked at the child, I found myself once more thinking over my odd little adventure with Lady Jane, and wondering whether it would be well to speak of it, and to whom? I had lived long enough to feel some of the troubles and complications both of speech and of silence. Once more my heart sank, as it used to do when difficulties seemed to grow on every side before I had come to this kind house of refuge. I pulled my table and my lamp to the window: the figures were still wandering in the garden; I saw Hester's white dress flit by more than once. Such nights count in the sum of one's life.

VI.

Missie was standing ready dressed in her Sunday frills and ribbons by my bedside when I awoke next morning.

"It is raining, mamma," she said. "We had wanted to go up to the beacon before breakfast."

It seemed difficult to believe that this was the same world that I had closed my eyes upon. The silent, brilliant, mysterious world of stars and sentiment was now grey, and mist-wreathed, and rain-drenched. The practical result of my observations was to say, "Missie, go and tell them to light a fire in the dining-room."

St. Julian, who is possessed by a horrible stray demon of punctuality, likes all his family to assemble to the sound of a certain clanging bell, that is poor Emilia's special aversion. Mrs. St. Julian never comes down to breakfast. I was only just in time this morning to fulfil my duties and make the tea and the coffee. Hester came out of her room as I passed the door. She, too, had come back to every-day life again, and had put away her white robes and lilies for a stuff dress,—a quaint blue dress, with puffed sleeves, and a pretty fanciful trimming of her mother's devising, gold braid and velvet round the wrists and neck. Her pretty gloom of dark hair was pinned up with golden pins. As I looked at her admiringly, I began to think to myself that, after all, rainy mornings were perhaps as compatible with sentiment as purple starry skies. I could not help thinking that there was something a little shy and conscious in her manner: she seemed to tread gently, as if she were afraid of waking someone, as if she were thinking of other things. She waited for me, and would not go into the dining-room until she had made sure that I was following. Only Hexham was there, reading his letters by the burning fire of wood, when we first came in. He turned round and smiled:—had the stars left their imprint upon him too? He

carried his selection of eggs and cutlets and toasted bread from the side-table, and put himself quietly down by Hester's side: all the others dropped in by degrees.

"Here is another French newspaper for you, papa," said Emilia, turning over her letters with a sigh. St. Julian took it from her quickly, and put it in his pocket.

Breakfast was over. The rain was still pouring in a fitful, gusty way, green ivy-leaves were dripping, creepers hanging dully glistening about the windows, against which the great fresh drops came tumbling. The children stood curiously watching, and making a play of the falling drops. There was Susy's rain-drop, and George's on the window-ledge, and Mr. Hexham's.

"Oh, Mr. Hexham's has won!" cried Susy, clasping her little fat hands in an agony of interest.

I looked out and saw the great gusts of rain beating and drifting against the hedgerows, wind-blown mists crossing the fields and the downs. It was a stormy Sunday, coming after that night of wonders. But the wind was high; the clouds might break. The church was two miles off, and we could not get there then; later we hoped we might have a calmer hour to walk to it.

The afternoon brightened as we had expected, and most of us went to afternoon service snugly wrapped in cloaks, and stoutly shod, walking up hill and down hill between the bright and dripping hedges to the little white-washed building where we Islanders are exhorting, buried, christened, married by turns. It is always to me a touching sight to see the country folks

gathering to the sound of the jangling village bells, as they ring their pleasant calls from among the ivy and birds'-nests in the steeple, and summon—what a strange, toil-worn, weather-beaten company!—to prayer and praise. Furrowed faces bent, hymn-books grasped in hard crooked fingers, the honest red smiling cheeks of the lads and lasses trudging along side by side, the ancient garments from lavender drawers, the brown old women from their kitchen corners, the babies toddling hand-in-hand. Does one not know the kindly Sunday throng, as it assembles, across fields and downs, from nestling farm and village byways? Mrs. William's children came trotting behind her, exchanging cautious glances with the Sunday-school, and trying to imitate a certain business-like, church-going air which their mother affected. Hexham and the others were following at some little distance. Emilia never spoke much, and to-day she was very silent; but though she was silent I could feel her depression, and knew, as well as if she had put it all into words, what was passing in her mind. Once during the service, I heard a low shivering sigh by my side, but when I glanced at her, her face looked placid, and as we came away the light of the setting sun came shining full upon it. A row of boys were sitting on the low churchyard wall in this western light, which lit up the fields and streamed across the homeward paths of the little congregation. I must not forget to say that, as we passed out, it seemed to me that, in the crowd waiting about the door, I recognised a tall and bending figure that I had seen somewhere before. Somewhere—by moonlight. I remembered presently where and when it was.

"Who was that?" asked Emilia, seeing me glance curiously.

"That is what I should like to know," said I. "Shall we wait for Lady Jane? I have a notion she could tell us."

We waited, but no Lady Jane appeared.

"She must have gone on," said Emilia. "It is getting cold; let us follow them, dear Queenie."

I was still undecided as to what I had better do. It seemed that it would be better to speak to Lady Jane herself than to relate my vague suspicions to anybody else. Little Emilia of all people was so innocent and unsuspecting that I hesitated before I told her what I had seen. I was hesitating still, when Emmy took my arm again.

"Come!" she said; and so we went on together through the darkening village street, past the cottages where the pans were shining against the walls as the kitchen fires flamed. The people began to disperse once more: some were at home, stooping as they crossed their low cottage thresholds; others were walking away along the paths and the hills that slope from the village church to cottages by the sea. We saw Hester and Aileen and Hexham going off by the long way over the downs; but no Lady Jane was with them. We were not far from home when Emilia stopped before a little rising mound by the roadside, on which a tufted holly-tree was standing, already reddening against the winter.

"That is the tree my husband likes," said she. "It was bright red with holly-berries the morning we were married. Little Bevvv watches the berries beginning to burn, as he calls it. I often bring him here."

Some people cannot put themselves into words, and

they say, not the actual thing they are feeling, but something quite unlike, and yet which means all they would say. Some other people, it is true, have words enough, but no selves to put to them. Emilia never said a striking thing, rarely a pathetic one; but her commonplaces came often more near to me than the most passionate expressions of love or devotion. Something in the way she looked, in the tone with which she spoke of the holly-tree, touched me more than there seemed any occasion for. I cannot tell what it was; but this I do know, that silence, dulness, everything utters at times, the very stones cry out, and, in one way or another, love finds a language that we all can understand.

We stood for a few minutes under the holly-tree, and then walked quickly home. I let Emilia go in. I waited outside in the dim grey garden, pacing up and down in the twilight. Lady Jane, as I expected, arrived some ten minutes after we did; but I missed the opportunity I had wished for, for Hexham and the two girls appeared almost at the same minute, with bright eyes and fresh rosy faces, from their walk, and we all went up to tea in the mistress's room.

This was the Williams' last evening. Only one little incident somewhat spoilt its harmony.

"Who was that Captain Sigourney, who called just after we had gone to church?" Mrs. William asked, innocently, during a pause in the talk at dinner.

This simple question caused some of us to look up curiously.

"Captain Sigourney," said Lady Jane, in a loud, trumpet-like tone, "is a friend of mine. I asked him to call upon me."

St. Julian gave one of his flashes, a look half-amused, half-angry. He glanced at his wife, and then at Lady Jane, who was cutting up her mutton into long strips, calmly excited, and prepared for battle. St. Julian was silent, however, and the engagement, if engagement there was to be, did not take place until later in the evening. I felt very glad the matter was taking this turn and that the absurd mystery, whatever it might be, should come to an end without my being implicated in it. It was no affair of mine if Lady Jane liked to have a dozen Captains in attendance upon her, but it seemed to me a foolish proceeding. I had reason to conclude that St. Julian had said something to Lady Jane that evening. I was not in the drawing-room after dinner. One of the servants was ill, and I was obliged to attend to her; but as I was coming down to say good-night to them all I met Lady Jane—I met a whirlwind in the passage. She gave me one look. Her whole aspect was terrible; her chains and many trinkets seemed rattling with indignation. She looked quite handsome in her fury; her red hair and false plaits seemed to stand on end, her eyes to pierce me through and through, and if I had been guilty I think I must have run away from this irate apparition. Do I dream it, or did I hear the two words, “impertinent interference,” as she turned round with the air of an empress, and shut her door loud in my face? Mrs. St. Julian happened to be in her room, and the noise brought her kind head out into the passage, and, not I am afraid very calmly or coherently, I told her what had happened.

“I must try and appease her. I suppose my husband has spoken to her,” said Mrs. St. Julian; and she

boldly went and knocked at the door of Lady Jane's room, and, after an instant's hesitation, walked quietly in. I do not know what charm she used, but somewhat to my dismay, a messenger came to me in the drawing-room presently to beg that I would speak to Lady Jane. I saw malicious Aileen with a gleam of fun in her eyes at my unfeigned alarm. I found Lady Jane standing in the middle of the room, in a majestic sort of dressing-gown, with all her long tawny locks about her shoulders. Mrs. St. Julian was sitting in an arm-chair near the toilet-table, which was all glittering with little bottles and ivory handles. This scarlet apparition came straight up to me as I entered, with three brisk strides. "I find I did you an injustice," she said, loftily relenting, though indignant still. "Mrs. St. Julian has explained matters to me. I thought you would be glad to know at once that I was aware of the mistake I had made. I beg your pardon. Good evening, Mrs. Campbell," said Lady Jane, dismissing me all of a breath. I found myself outside in the dark passage again, with a curious dazzle of the brilliantly lighted room, with its odd perfume of ottar of roses, of that weird apparition with its flaming robe and red hair and burning cheeks.

I was too busy next morning helping Mrs. William and her children and boxes to get off by the early boat, to have much time to think of apparitions or my own wounded feelings. Dear little Georgy and Susy peeped out of the carriage-window with many farewell kisses. The three girls stood waving their hands as the carriage drove past the garden. The usual break-fast-bell rang and we all assembled, and Lady Jane, whose anger was never long-lived, came down in

pretty good-humour. To me she was most friendly. There was a shade of displeasure in her manner to St. Julian. To Hexham she said that she had quite determined upon an expedition to Warren Bay that afternoon, and to the castle next day, and she hoped he would come too. Lady Jane bustled off after breakfast to order a carriage.

VII.

From "the mistress's" room, with its corner windows looking out every way, we could see downs, and sea, and fields, and the busy road down to the shore. Mrs. St. Julian was able to be out so little that she liked life at second-hand, and the sight of people passing, and of her children swinging at the gate, and of St. Julian as he came and went from his studio sometimes, with his pipe and his broad-brimmed hat—all this was a never-failing delight to her. Hester sat writing for her mother this morning. It was the Monday after Lady Jane's arrival, and I established myself with my work in the window. Suddenly the mother asked, "Where is Emilia?"

"Emilia is in the garden with Bevis," said Hester; "they were picking red berries off the hedge when I came up."

"And where is Lady Jane?" said Mrs. St. Julian.

"She is gone to look at a pony-carriage, with her maid," said Hester.

"Poor Lady Jane was very indignant last night. You will be amused to hear that I am supposed to be encouraging a young man at this moment, for purposes

of my own, to carry her off," said Mrs. St. Julian. "I am afraid Henry is vexed about it. Look here." As she spoke she gave me a satiny, flowingly-written note to read.

"Castle Scudamore, Saturday.

"Dear Mrs. St. Julian,—I have been made aware that my stepdaughter has been followed to your house by a person with whom I and her father are most anxious that she should have no communication *whatever*. Whether this has happened with your cognizance I cannot tell, but I shall naturally consider you responsible while she is under your roof, and I must beg you will be so good as not to continue to admit Captain Sigourney's visits. He is a person totally unsuitable in *every* respect to my step-daughter, and it is a marriage her father could not sanction.

"I hope Emilia is well, and that she has had satisfactory accounts by this last mail. We received a few lines only, on business, from Bevis.

"Believe me, Yours truly,

"E. MOUNTMORE."

"The whole thing is almost too absurd to be vexed about," said Mrs. St. Julian, smiling.

"Why was Lady Jane so angry with you, Queenie?" Hester asked; and then it was I confessed what I had seen that evening on the Knoll.

"Lady Jane told me all about it," my mistress continued. "She says Captain Sigourney's only object in life is to see her pass by. To tell you the truth, I do not think she cares in the least for him. She found him at the gate that evening, she says." Mrs. St. Julian

hesitated, and then went on. "She must be very attractive. She tells me that she believes Mr. Hexham admires her very much, and that, on the whole, she thinks he is more the sort of person to suit her." Mrs. St. Julian spoke with a little gentle malice; and yet I could see she half believed, and that there was prudence, too, in what she was saying.

There was a pause. Hester looked straight before her, and I stitched on. At last the mother spoke again,—

"I wish you would go to Emilia, my Hester," she said, a little anxiously. "I am afraid she is fretting sometimes when she is by herself."

"You poor mamma," cried Hester, jumping up and running to her, and kissing her again and again: "you have all our pain and none of our fun."

"Don't you think so, my dear," said the mother; "I think I have both." Then she called Hester back to her, held her hand, and looked into her face tenderly for a minute. "Go, darling!—but—but take care," she said, as she let her go.

"Take care of what, mamma?" the girl asked, a little consciously; and then Hester ran off, as all young girls will do, nothing loth to get out into the sunshine.

I stitched on at my work, but presently looking up I saw that Hester and Emilia were not alone; Mr. Hexham, who had, I suppose, been smoking his cigar in the garden, had joined them. He was lifting Bevis high up over head, to pick the berries that were shining in the hedge. The Lodges seemed built for pretty live pictures; and the mistress's room, most specially of all the rooms in the house, is a peep-show to see

them from. Through this window, with its illuminated border of clematis and ivy and Virginian creeper, I could see the bit of garden lawn, green still and sunlit; the two pretty sisters, in their flowing dresses, straight and slim, smiling at little Bevis; the high sweetbriar hedge, branching like a bower over their heads; and the swallows skimming across the distant down. This was the most romantic window of the three which lighted her room, and I asked my cousin to come and see a pretty group. She smiled, and then sighed as she looked. Poor troubled mother!

"I cannot feel one moment's ease about Bevis," she said. "My poor Emmy! And yet Lady Jane was very positive."

"We shall know to-morrow. You are too anxious, I think," I answered cheerfully; and then I could not help asking her if she thought she should ever be as anxious about George Hexham.

She did not answer except by a soft little smile. Then she sighed again.

Lady Jane's expected letter had not come that Monday evening, but Mrs. St. Julian hoped on. Emilia was daily growing more anxious; she said very little, but every opening door startled her, every word seemed to her to have a meaning. She began to have a clear, ill-defined feeling that they were hiding something from her, and yet, poor little thing, she did not dare ask, for fear of getting bad news. Her soft, wan, appealing looks went to the very hearts of the people looking on. Lady Jane was the only person who could resist her. She was, or seemed to be, ruffled and annoyed, that anyone should be anxious when she had said there was no occasion for fear. Mrs. St. Julian would

have quietly put off a certain expedition which had been arranged some time before for the next day; but Lady Jane, out of very opposition, was most eager and decided that it should take place. An invitation came for the girls to a ball; this the parents decidedly refused, though Hexham, and Hester too, looked sorely disappointed. Of course Lady Jane knew no reason for any special anxiety, any more than Emilia, and perhaps her confidence and cheerfulness were the best medicine for the poor young wife; who, seeing the sister so bright, began to think that she had overestimated dangers which she only dimly felt and guessed at. So the carriages were ordered after luncheon; but the sun was shining bright in the morning, and Hexham asked Hester and Aileen (shyly, and hesitating as he spoke), if they would mind being photographed directly.

"Why should you not try a group?" said St. Julian. "Here are Hester, Lady Jane, Missie and Emilia, all wanting to be done at once."

Emilia shrank back, and said she only wanted baby done, not herself.

"I was longing to try a group," said Hexham, "and only waiting for leave. How will you sit?" And he began placing them in a sort of row, two up and one down, with a property-table in the middle. He then began focussing, and presently emerged, pale and breathless and excited, from the little black hood into which he had dived. "Will you look?" said he to St. Julian.

"I think it might be improved upon," said St. Julian, getting interested. "Look up, Missie—up, up. That

is better. And cannot you take the ribbon out of your hair?"

"Yes, uncle St. Julian," said Missie; "but it will all tumble down."

"Never mind that," said he; and with one hand Missie pulled away the snood, and then the beautiful stream came flowing and rippling and falling all about her shoulders.

"That is excellent," said the painter. "You, too, Hester, shake out your locks." Then he began sending one for one thing and one for another. I was despatched for some lilies into the garden, and Lady Jane came too, carrying little Bevis in her arms. When we got back we found one of the prettiest sights I have ever yet seen,—a dream of fair ladies against an ivy wall, flowers and flowing locks, and sweeping garments. It is impossible to describe the peculiar charm of this living, breathing picture. Emilia, after all, had been made to come into it: little Bevis clapped his hands, and said, "Pooty mamma," when he saw her.

"I don't mind being done in the group," said Lady Jane, "if you will promise not to put any of those absurd white pinafores on me."

Neither of the gentlemen answered, they were both too busy. As for me, I shall never forget the sweet child wonder in my little girl's face, Hester's bright deep eyes, or my poor Emilia's patient and most affecting expression, as they all stood there motionless; while Hexham held his watch, and St. Julian looked on, almost as excited as the photographer. As Hexham rushed away into his van, with the glass under his arm, we all began talking again.

"It takes one's breath away," said St. Julian, quite excited, "to have the picture there, breathing on the glass, and to feel every instant that it may vanish or dissolve with a word, with a breath. I should never have nerve for photography."

"I believe the great objection is that it blackens one's fingers so," said Lady Jane. "I should have tried it myself, but I did not care to soil my hands."

As for the picture, Hexham came out wildly exclaiming from his little dark room: never had he done anything so strangely beautiful,—he could not believe it; it was magical. The self-controlled young man was quite wild with delight and excitement. Lord Ulleskelf walked up, just as we were all clustering round, and he, too, admired immensely.

Hexham rushed up to St. Julian. "It is your doing," he said. "It is wonderful. My fortune is made." He all but embraced his precious glass.

St. Julian was to be the next subject. What a noble wild head it was! There was something human and yet almost mysterious to me in the flash of those pale circling eyes with the black brows and shaggy grey hair. But Hexham's luck failed him, perhaps from over-excitement and inexperience in success. Three or four attempts failed, and we were still at it when the luncheon-bell rang. Hexham was for going on all day; but St. Julian laughed and said it should be another time. This sentiment was particularly approved by Lady Jane, who had a childish liking for expeditions and picnickings, and who had set her heart upon carrying out her drive that afternoon.

VIII.

Hexham had known scarcely anything before this of home life or home peace. He had carefully treasured his liberty, and vowed to himself that he would keep that liberty always. But now that he had seen Hester, fair and maidenly, and serene, he could not tell what mysterious sympathy had attracted him. To speak of her, to hear her shy tender voice, affected him strangely. George Hexham did not care to give way to sentimental emotion; he felt that his hour had come. He had shared the common lot of men. It was a pity, perhaps, to give up independence and freedom and peace of mind, but no sacrifice was too great to win so dear a prize. So said the photographer to himself as he looked at the glass upon which her image was printed, that image with the wondering eyes. He must get one more picture, he thought, eating his luncheon thoughtfully, but with a good appetite,—one more of Hester alone. He determined to try and keep her at home that afternoon.

He followed her as she left the room.

"You are not going? Do stay," said Hexham, imploringly: "I want you; I want a picture of you all to myself. I told my man we should come back after luncheon."

Hester coloured up. Her mother's warning was still in her ears.

"I—I am afraid I must go," she said shyly.

"What nonsense!" cried Hexham, who was perfectly unused to contradiction, and excited by his success.

"I shall go and tell your mother that it is horrible tyranny to send you off with that *corvée* of children and women, and that you want to stay behind. Lady Jane would stay if I asked her."

Hester did not quite approve of this familiar way of speaking. She drew herself up more and more shyly and coldly.

"No, thank you," she said; "mamma lets me do just as I like. I had rather go with the others."

"In that case," said Hexham, offended, "I shall not presume to interfere." And he turned and walked away.

What is a difference? A word that means nothing,—a look a little to the right or to the left of an appealing glance. I think that people who quarrel are often as fond of one another as people who embrace. They speak a different language, that is all. Affection and agreement are things quite apart. To agree with the people you love is a blessing unspeakable. But people who differ may also be travelling along the same road on opposite sides. And there are two sides to every road that both lead the same way.

Hexham was so unused to being opposed that his indignation knew no bounds. He first thought of remaining behind, and showing his displeasure by a haughty seclusion. But Lady Jane happened to drive up with Aileen in the pony-carriage she had hired, feathers flying, gauntleted, all prepared to conquer.

"Won't you come with us, Mr. Hexham?" she said, in her most gracious tone.

After a moment's hesitation, Hexham jumped in, for he saw Hester standing not far off, and he began immediately to make himself as agreeable as he pos-

sibly could to his companion. It was not much that happened this afternoon, but trifles show which way the wind is blowing. Lady Jane and her cavalier went first, the rest of us followed in Mrs. St. Julian's carriage. We were bound for a certain pretty bay some two miles off. The way there led across a wide and desolate warren, where sand and gorse spread on either side to meet a sky whose reflections always seemed to me saddened by the dark growth of this arid place. A broad stony military road led to a building on the edge of the cliff—a hotel, where the carriages put up. Then we began clambering down the side of the cliff, out of this somewhat dreary region, into a world brighter and more lovely than I have words to put to it—a smiling plain of glassy blue sea, a vast firmament of heaven; and close at hand bright sandy banks, shining with streams of colour reflected from the crystals upheaved in shining strands; and farther off the boats drifting towards the opal Broadshire Hills.

I do not suppose that anybody seeing us strolling along these lovely cliffs would have guessed the odd and depressing influence that was at work upon most of us. As far as Lady Jane and Hexham and Aileen were concerned, the expedition seemed successful enough; they laughed and chattered, and laughed again. Emilia and her sister followed, listening to their shrieks, in silence, with little Bevis between them. Missie and I brought up the rear. Lady Jane seemed quite well pleased with her companion, and evidently expected his homage all to herself. I could have shaken her for being so stupid. Could she not see that not one single word he spoke was intended for

her. Every one of Hexham's arrows flew straight to the gentle heart for which they were intended. It was not a very long walk—perhaps half an hour in duration—but half an hour is long enough to change a lifetime, to put a new meaning to all that has passed, and to all that is yet to come. People may laugh at such a thing as *désillusionnement*, but it is a very real and very bitter thing, for all that people may say. To some constant natures certainty and unchangeableness are the great charm, the whole meaning of love. Hester, suddenly bewildered and made to doubt, would freeze and change, and fly at a shadow where Hester, once certain, would endure all things, bear and hope, and forgive. I could see that Hexham did not dislike a little excitement; *l'imprévu* had an immense charm for him. He was rapid, determined; so sure of himself that he could afford not to be sure of others. Hexham's tactics were very simple. He loved Hester.*

* (Fragment of a letter found in Mr. Hexham's room after his departure:—)

. . . . A little bit of the island is shining through my open glass-pane. I see a green field with a low hedge, a thatched farm, woods, flecks of shade, a line of down rising from the frill of the muslin blind to the straggling branch of clematis that has been put to grow round my window. It is all a nothing compared to really beautiful scenery, and yet it is everything when one has once been conquered by the charm of the place,—the still, sweet influence of its tender lights, its charming *humility* and unpretension, if one can so speak of anything inanimate. It is six o'clock; the sky is patched and streaked with grey and yellowish clouds upon a faint sunset aquamarine; a wind from the sea is moving through the clematis and making the light tendrils dance and swing; a sudden unexpected gleam of light has worked enchantment with the field and the farmstead, the straw is a-flame, the thatch is golden, the dry stubble is gleaming. A sense of peace and evening and rest comes over me as I write and look from my window. This sort of family-life suits me. I do not find time heavy on my hands. St. Julian is a lucky fellow to be the ruler of such a pleasant dominion. I never saw anything more charmingly pretty than its boundaries studded with scarlet berries, and twisted twigs, with birds starting and flying across the road, almost under our horse's feet, as we came along. I am glad I came. Old St. Julian is as ever capital company, and the most hospitable of hosts. Mrs. St. Julian is an old love of mine: she is a sweet and gracious creature. This is more than I can say of my fellow-guest,

From an Island.

Of this he had no doubt, but he had no idea of loving a woman as Shakspeare, for instance, was content to love, or at least to write of it—"Being your slave, what should I do but wait?" This was not in Hexham's philosophy. Hester had offended him, and he had been snubbed; he would show her his indifference, and punish her for his punishment.

We were all on our way back to the carriages when Hester stopped suddenly at a little zigzag path leading down to the sands, down which Missie and I had been scrambling. "Do you think Bevvv could get down here?" she asked. "Do let us go down, Emilia. I think we have time; the carriages are not yet ready."

Emilia, although frightened out of her wits, instantly assented, and Missie and I watched Hester springing from rock to rock, and from step to step. She lifted Bevis safe down the steep side; little falling stones, and shells, and sands went showering on to the shingle below: a seagull came out of a hole in the sand, and flew out to sea. Bevvv screamed with delight. Hester's quick light step seemed everywhere: she put him safe

Lady Jane Beverley, who is the most overpowering of women. I carefully keep out of her way, but I cannot always escape her. Hester St. Julian is very like her mother, but with something of St. Julian's strength of character—she has almost too much. She was angry with me to-day. Perhaps I deserved it. I hope she has forgiven me by this time, for I, to tell the truth, cannot afford to quarrel with her.

Lord Ulleskelf is here a good deal; his long white hair is more silvery than ever; he came up this morning to see my photography; I wish you had been standing by to see our general eagerness and excitement; the fact is, that here in this island, the simplest emotions seem intensified and magnified. Its very stillness and isolation keep us and our energies from overpassing its boundaries. I have been here two days,—I feel as if I had spent a lifetime in the place, and were never going away any more, and as if the world all about was as visionary as the grey Broadshire Hills that we see from High Down. As for certain old loves and interests that you may have known of, I do not believe they ever existed, except upon paper. If I mistake not, I have found an interest here more deep than any passing fancy. . . .

down below, and then sprang up again to her sister's help. The little excitement acted like a tonic: "How pretty it is here," she said.

We had sat for some ten minutes under the wing of the great cliff, in an arch or hollow, lined with a slender tracery of granite lines close following one another. The arching ridge of the cliff cut the high line of blue sea sharply into a curve.

"It was like a desert island," Hester said, looking at the little cove enclosed in its mighty walls, with the smooth unfurrowed crescent of shingle gleaming and shining, and the white light little waves rushing against the stones; "an island upon which we had been wrecked."

"An island," I thought to myself, "that no Hexham had as yet discovered." I wondered how long it would be deserted.

Missie, tired of sitting still, soon wandered off, and disappeared beyond the side of the cliff. I do not know how long we should have stayed there if little Bevis, who had never yet heard of a desert island, and who thought people always all lived together, and that it was naughty to be shy, and that he was getting very hungry, and that he had better cry a little, had not suddenly set up a shrill and imperious demand for his dinner, his "ome," as he called it, Tarah his nurse, and his rocking-horse. Emilia jumped up, and Hester too.

"It must be time for us to go," said Mrs. Beverley.

It is generally easier to climb up than to descend, and so it would have been now for Hester alone. I do not know why the sun-beaten path seemed so hard, the blocks of stone so loose and crumbling. Hester

went first, with Bevis in her arms, and at first got on pretty well; but for some reason or other — perhaps that in coming down we had disturbed the stones — certainly as she went on her footsteps seemed less rapid and lucky than they usually were. She stumbled, righted herself, took another step, Bevis clinging tight to her neck. Emilia cried out, frightened. Hester, a little nervous, put Bevy on a big stone, and stood breathless for an instant. "Come up, Emmy," she said; "this way — there, to that next big step. Emmy did her best, but before she could catch at Hester's extended hand her foot slipped again, and she gave another little scream.

"Hester, help me!"

I was at some little distance. I had tried a little independent track of my own, which proved more impracticable than I had expected. It was in vain I tried to get to Emilia's assistance. There was no real danger for Emilia, clinging to a big granite boulder fixed in the sand, but it was absurd and not pleasant. The sun baked upon the sandy paths. Hester told Bevy to sit still while she went to help mamma. "No, no, no," cried little Bevis when his aunt attempted to leave him, clutching at her with a sudden spring, which nearly upset her. It was at this instant that I saw, to my inexpressible relief, two keen eyes peering over the edge of the cliff, and Hexham coming down the little path to our relief.

"I could not think where you had got to," he said; "I came back to see. Will you take hold of my stick, Mrs. Beverley; I will come back for the boy, Miss St. Julian." Hexham would have returned a third time for Hester, but she was close behind him, and silently

rejected his proffered help. George Hexham turned away in silence. Hester was already scarcely grateful to him for coming back at all. He had spoken to her, but her manner had been so cold, his voice so hard, that it seemed as if indeed all was over between them. Hester was no gentle Griselda, but a tender and yet imperious princess, accustomed to confer favours and to receive gratitude from her subjects. Here was one who had revolted from his allegiance.

IX.

The day had begun well and brightly, but there was a jar in the music that evening which was evident enough to most of us. We had all been highly wrought from one cause and another, and this may have accounted for some natural reaction. For one thing, we missed William and his family; tiresome as Mrs. William undoubtedly was, her placid monotone harmonised with the rest of the performance, for though she was prosy, she was certainly sweet-tempered, and the children were charming. It had seemed like the beginning of the summer's end to see them drive off; little hands waving and rosy faces smiling good-by. Poor Missie was in despair, and went to bed early. Lady Jane sat in her corner, looking black and still offended with her host; something had occasioned a renewed access of indignation. Mrs. St. Julian did her very best to propitiate her indignant guest, but the poor lady gave up trying at last, and leant back in her chair wearily, and closed her eyes. I myself was haunted by the ill-defined feeling of something amiss,

—of trouble present or at hand. Hester, too, was out of spirits. It was evident that she and Mr. Hexham had not quite forgiven each other for the morning's discussion. Altogether it was a dismal disjointed evening, during which a new phase of Hexham's character was revealed to us, and it was not the best or the kindest. There was a hard look in his handsome face and sceptical tone in his voice. He seemed possessed by what the French call *l'esprit moqueur*. Hester, pained and silenced at last, would scarcely answer him when he spoke. Her father with an effort got up and took a book and began to read something out of one of Wordsworth's sonnets. It is always delightful to me to hear St. Julian read. His voice rolled and thrilled through the room, and we were all silent for a moment:

Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart,
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea.

"I hate Wordsworth. He is always preaching," said Hexham, as St. Julian ceased reading. "I never feel so wicked as when I am being preached at."

"I am sorry for you," said St. Julian drily. "I have never been able to read this passage of Wordsworth without emotion since I was a boy, and first found it in my school-books."

Hester had jumped up and slipped out of the room while this discussion was going on; I followed presently, for I remembered a little bit of work which St. Julian had asked us to see to that evening."

He used sometimes to give me work to do for him, although I was not so clever as Hester in fashioning and fitting the things he wanted for his models; but I did my best, and between us we had produced some

very respectable coiffes, wimples, slashed bodices, and other bygone elegancies. We had also concocted an Italian peasant, and a mediæval princess, and a dear little Dutch girl—our triumph. I found I had not my materials at hand, and I went to the studio to look for them. I was looking for a certain piece of silken stuff which I thought I had seen in the outer studio, and which my cousin had asked me to stitch together so as to make a cloak. I turned the things over and over, but I could not discover what I was in quest of among the piles and heaped-up properties that were kept there. I supposed it must be in the inner room, and I lifted the curtain and went in. I had expected to find the place dark, and silent, and empty. But the room was not dark. The wood-fire was burning; the tall candles were lighted; the pictures on the walls were vivid with the light, and looking almost alive, with those strange living eyes that St. Julian knew so well how to paint; there was the statesman in his robe; the musician leaning against the wall, drawing his bow across the strings of his violin. As I looked at him in the stream of the fire-flame, I almost expected to hear the conquering sound of the melody. But he did not play; he seemed to be waiting, and looking out, and listening to other music than his own. All these pictures were so familiar to us all as we came and went, that we often scarcely paused to look at them. But to-night in the firelight, they impressed me anew with a sense of admiration for the wonderful power of the man who had produced them. Over the chimney hung a poet, noble and simple and kingly, as St. Julian had painted him. Next to the poet was the head of a calm and beautiful woman, bending in a

stream of light. It was either Emilia or her mother in her youth. . . . An evangelist, with a grand, quiet brow and a white flood of silver beard, came next; and then warriors, and nobles, and maidens with flowing hair. There was someone in the room. Hester was standing underneath the picture of the evangelist, a real living picture. Her head was leaning wearily against the wall. She had come in before me, and seemed standing in a dreary way, and lost in thought. The silk stuffs she had collected were on the ground at her feet and the pattern cloak was hanging from a chair; but she had thrown her work away. I don't know why, unless it was that her eyes were full of great tired tears that she was trying vainly to keep back.

"My dear," I said, frightened; "my dear, what is it? What has happened? Has he vexed you?" I hated myself next instant. I had spoken hastily and without reflection. My question upset her; she struggled for a minute, and then burst out crying, though she was a brave girl—courageous and not given to useless complaints. Then she looked up, flushing crimson reproach at me. "It is not what you seem to think," she said. "Don't you know me better? It is something—I don't know what. How foolish I am." And this time, with an effort, she conquered her tears. "Oh, Queenie!" she said, "I know there is something wrong; some terrible news. I don't dare ask, for they have not told me; and I don't, don't dare ask," she repeated. I was silent, for she was speaking the thought which had been in my own heart of late. At last I said, "One has foolish, nervous frights at times. What makes you so afraid, Hester?"

Hester smiled, with her tear-dimmed face.

"There has been another absurd and provoking scene," she said, "with Lady Jane. Something she said of anxiety, and a letter, and—and—I don't know what frightened me," said Hester, faltering. "She said she would go immediately, that she should marry, meet, write, invite anybody she chose, and that if it were not for this anxiety for Emilia—some letter she expected—she would leave us that instant; and then my mother stopped her, and that is all I know," said Hester, with a great sigh. "It is not worth crying for, is it, Queenie?"

As she spoke the door opened and St. Julian and Hexham came in to smoke their evening pipes. Hester drew herself up with bright flushed cheeks and said a haughty good-night to Hexham as she passed him. But in my heart I thought more than one doubt had caused Hester's tears to flow that night.

Hexham seemed unconscious enough. "I shall be quite ready for sitters to-morrow morning, Miss Hester," said the provoking young man cheerfully. "You won't disappoint me again?"

Hester did not answer, and walked out of the room.

Hexham tried to persuade himself next day that he had made it all right with Hester over-night. He had come down late and had missed her at breakfast, but he made sure she would not fail him, and he got ready his chemicals and kept telling himself that she would come. The glasses were polished bright, and in their places. Everything was as it should be, he thought; the sun was shining as photographers wish it to shine. Once hearing steps Hexham turned hastily,

but it was only St. Julian on his way to his studio; Lady Jane went by presently; then Lord Ulleskelf passed by; and each time Hexham felt more aggrieved and disappointed. Hexham came to me twice as I sat at work in the drawing-room window, but I did not know where Hester had gone, or if she meant to sit to him. Little Missie went by last of all. The child had her hands full of grasses that I had sent her to gather. She went wandering on between the garden beds with a little busy brain full of pretty fancies, strange fairy dreams and stories of a world in which she was living apart from us all. The tall pampas grasses waved over my little maiden's head and bowed their yellow flowers in the wind. The myrtles glimmered mysteriously, the tamarisks drooped their fringed stems, wind-blown shrubs shivered and shook, while a woodpecker from the outer world who had ventured into fairy realms was laboriously climbing the stem of a slender elm-tree. Hexham asked Missie if she knew where Hester was, and the child, waking up, pointed to the house: "She was there, at work for uncle Henry, in the housekeeper's room, as I passed," said she.

Hexham was, as I have said, a young man of an impatient humour. He was a little hard as young men are apt to be. But there was something reassuring in his very hardness and faith in himself and his own doings. It was reassuring because it was a genuine expression of youthful strength and power. No bad man could have had that perfect confidence which marked most of George Hexham's sayings and doings. His was, after all, the complacency of good intentions.

He had taken it as a matter of course, not only that Hester would come, but that she would come with

a feeling not unlike the feeling with which he was expecting her. He could not understand her absence, her continued coldness. What did it mean? did it, could it mean that she was unconscious of his admiration? It had suddenly become a matter of utter consequence to the young man that he should find her now, reproach her, read her face, and discover why she had thwarted him. He might see her all day and at any hour, and yet this was the hour he had set apart as his own—when he wanted her—the hour he had looked forward to and counted on and longed for. He came to me a third time, and asked me if I would take a message for him. I was a little sorry for him, although I thought he deserved this gentle punishment.

"If you will come with me we will go and look for her," I said.

"You are doing me an immense kindness," cried Hexham gratefully.

The housekeeper's room could be entered by the court-yard: it was next to the outer studio, into which it led by a door. It was used for models and had been taken from the servants. As Missie had said, Hester was sitting in the window at work when we came in; the door into the studio was open, and I heard voices of people talking within.

Hester's needle flew along in a sort of rhythmic measure. She knew Hexham had come in with me, but she did not look up, only worked on. Poor Hester! her heart was too heavy for blushes or passing agitations. Hexham had wounded her and disappointed her, but, young as she was, the girl had a sense of the fitness of things which kept her from betraying all she

felt; and, indeed, this great unaccountable feeling of anxiety now occupied most thoughts and feelings, except those to which she would not own. George Hexham stood with a curious face, full of anger and sympathy and compunction, watching her stitches as they flew. One, two, three, he counted, and the quaint little garment turned and twisted in her pale hands. Once she looked up at him. It would have been better if she had looked reproachful; but no, it was a grave cold glance she gave, and then her head bent down once more over her work. I left them to their own explanations, and went back to my drawing-room window.

Afterwards Hester told me how angry she was with me for bringing him.

"Have you nearly done? May I talk to you when you have finished that stitching?" he said to her presently.

"I can listen while I work," said Hester, still sewing, and if she paused it was only to measure the seams upon the little model for whom they were intended.

That needle flying seemed to poor Hexham an impassable barrier—a weapon wielded by this Amazon that he could not overcome. It kept him at arms' length; it absorbed her attention; she scarcely listened to what he said as she stuck and threaded and travelled along the strange little garment. He found himself counting the stitches—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,—it was absurd; it was like an enchantment.

"Hester," cried Hexham, "you won't understand me!" Hester worked on and did not answer. His

voice was quick, passionate, and agitated. "You are so calm," he cried. "I do not believe the common weaknesses of life touch you in the least, or that you ever know how to make any allowance for others."

"I can make allowance," faltered Hester, as with trembling hands she stooped and began tying on the child's little garment.

To Hexham's annoyance, at that moment St. Julian appeared.

"You here, Hexham? Come and see Lord Ulleskelf. Is the child ready?" he asked. "That is right;" and he led off the little girl, in her funny Velasquez dress, trotting along to his long quick strides. Hexham followed them to the door, and then turned back slowly.

Hester had sunk wearily in the chair in which she had been sitting, leaning her head upon her hand. She thought it was all over; Hexham was gone. "She did not care," she said to herself; as people say they do not care, when they know in their heart of hearts that they have but to speak to call a welcome answering voice, to put out their hand for another hand to grasp. They do not say so when all is really gone, and there is no answer anywhere. Sometimes she softened, but Hester was indignant to think of the possibility of having been laughed at and made a play of when she herself had come with a heart trusting and true and tender. He could not care for Lady Jane, but he had ventured to say more than he really felt to Hester herself. Now it seemed to her that the whole aim and object of her behaviour should be to prevent Hexham from guessing what she had foolishly fancied—Hexham, who had come back, and who was

standing looking with keen doubtful glances into her face. She turned her two clear inscrutable eyes upon him once more, and tried to meet his gaze quietly, but her eyes fell beneath his.

"Hester," he said once again, and stopped short, hearing a step at the door. Poor Hester blushed up crimson with blushes that she blushed for again. Had she betrayed herself? Ah, no, no! She started up. "I must go," she said. Ah! she would go to her father. There was love, tender and generous love, to shield, to protect, to help her; not love like this, that was but a play, false, cruel, ready to wound.

"Dear Hester, don't go! Stay!" Hexham entreated, as she began to move towards the door leading to her father's studio. He had not chosen his time well, poor fellow, for Lady Jane, who was still in the outer studio, hearing his voice, came to the door, looked in for one instant, and turned away with an odd expression in her face and a brisk shrug of the shoulders. They both saw her. Hester looked up once again, with doubtful, questioning eyes, and then there was a minute's silence. Hexham understood her: a minute ago he had been gentle, now her doubts angered him.

"Why are you so hard to me?" he burst out at last, a little indignantly, and thoroughly in earnest. "How can you suppose I have ever fancied that odious woman? Will you believe me, or not, when I tell you how truly and devotedly I love and admire you? You are the only woman I have ever seen whom I would make my wife. If you send me away you will crush all that is best and truest in my nature, and destroy my only chance of salvation."

"This is not the way to speak," said Hester,

gravely, with a beating heart. His hardness frightened her, as her coldness and self-control angered him; and yet he could not quite forget her sudden emotion of a moment before. It was a curious reluctant attraction that seemed to unite these two people, who loved each other, and yet were cold; and who were playing with their best chance of happiness, and wilfully putting it away. They stood looking at each other, doubtful still, excited, at once angry and gentle.

"How can I trust you," said proud Hester, "after yesterday?—after—— No, you do not really care for me, or——"

It was, I think, at that moment that they heard a sort of low stifled scream from outside, and then hasty footsteps. Hester started. "Was that Lady Jane?" she said. "Oh, what is it? Oh, has it come?" Unnerved, excited, she put up her two hands nervously, and instinctively turning to Hexham for help.

"My dearest," said Hexham, melting, utterly forgetting all her coldness, thinking only of her—"what is it—what do you fear?" and as he spoke he kept her back for one instant by the two trembling hands, grasping them firmly in his own. . . .

No other word was spoken, but from that moment they felt that they belonged to each other.

"I don't know what I fear," she said. "Oh, come, come!"

PART III.

X.

LADY JANE had walked angrily out through the studio door into the garden. Her temper had not been improved by a disagreeable scolding letter from Lady Mountmore which had just been put into her hand. It contained the long-looked-for scrap from Bevis, which his father had forwarded. Lady Jane was venting a certain inward indignation in a brisk walk up and down the front of the house, when Lord Ulleskelf came towards her.

"Are you coming this afternoon to explore the castle with us?" she asked. "I believe we are all going—that is, most of us. Aileen and Missie have gone off with my maid in the coach."

He shook his head. "No," he said. "And I think if it were not for the children's sake you none of you would much care to go. But I suppose it is better to live on as usual and make no change to express the hidden anxieties which trouble us all at times."

"Well, I must say I think it is very ridiculous," said Lady Jane, who was thoroughly out of temper. "These young wives seem to think that they and their husbands are of so much consequence, that every convulsion of life and nature must combine to injure them and keep them apart."

Lord Ulleskelf had spoken forgetting that Lady Jane was quite ignorant of their present cause for alarm. He was half indignant at what he thought utter want of feeling, half convinced by Lady Jane's logic. He had first known St. Julian at Rome, years before, and had been his friend all his life. He admired his genius, loved the girls, and was devoted to the mother: any trouble which befell them came home to him almost as a personal matter. . . .

"It is perfectly absurd," the young lady went on. "We have heard at home all was well! and I cannot sympathise with this mawkish sentimentality. I hate humbug. I'm a peculiar character, and I always disliked much ado about nothing. I am something of a stoic."

"You heard by this mail?" said Lord Ulleskelf, anxiously.

"Of course we did," said Lady Jane. "I had written to my father to send me the letter. Here it is." And she put it into his hand.

They had walked on side by side, and come almost in front of the house, with its open windows. Lady Jane was utterly vexed and put out. Hexham's look of annoyance when she had burst in a minute before was the last drop in her cup, and she now went on, in her jerky way,—

"Emilia is all very well; but really I do pity poor Bevis if this is the future in store for him—an anxious wife taking fright at every shadow. Mrs. St. Julian only encourages her in her want of self-control. It is absurd."

Lord Ulleskelf, who had been examining the letter with some anxiety, folded it up. He was shocked and

overcome. He confessed to me afterwards that he thought there was no necessity for sparing the feelings of a young lady so well able as Lady Jane to bear anxiety and to blame the over-sensitiveness of others. The letter was short, and about money affairs. In a postscript to the letter, Bevis said,—“Da Costa and Dubois want me to join a shooting expedition; but I shall not be able to get away.” This was some slight comfort, though to Lord Ulleskelf it only seemed a confirmation of his worst fears.

“It is not a shadow,” he said, gravely. “If you like to look at this”—and he took a folded newspaper out of his pocket—“you will see why we have been so anxious for poor Emmy. Someone sent me a French paper, in which a paragraph had been copied from the Rio paper, containing an account of an accident to some young Englishman there. I have now, with some difficulty, obtained the original paper itself, with fuller particulars. You will see that this translation is added. I need not ask you to spare Mrs. Bevis a little longer, while the news is uncertain. The accident happened on the 2nd, four days before the steamer left. This letter is dated the 30th August, and must have been written before the accident happened.”

He turned away as he spoke, and left her standing there, poor woman, in the blaze of sunshine. Lady Jane never forgot that minute. The sea washed in the distance, a flight of birds flew overhead, the sun poured down. She stamped upon the crumbling gravel and then, with an odd, choked sort of cry—hearing some of them coming—fairly ran into the house and

stairs and along the passage into the mistress's room, which the door happened to be open.

This was the cry which brought Hester and Hexum out into the yard. I was in the drawing-room, when Lord Ulleskelf came in hurriedly, looking very much disturbed.

"Mrs. Campbell, for heaven's sake go to Lady Jane!" he cried. "Do not let her alarm Emilia. I have been most indiscreet—much to blame. Pray go."

I put down my work and hurried upstairs as he told me. As I went I could hear poor Lady Jane's sob. I had reached the end of the gallery when I saw a door open, and a figure running towards the mistress's room. Then I knew I was too late, for it was Emmy, who from her mother's bedroom had also heard the cry.

"Mamma, something is wrong," said Emilia, "hold me for me!" And before her mother could prevent her she had put the child in her arms and run along the passage to see what was the matter.

How shall I tell the cruel pang which was waiting for her, running up unconscious to meet the stab. Lady Jane was sitting crying on Mrs. St. Julian's little sofa. When she saw Emmy she lost all presence of mind: she cried out, "Don't, don't come, Emmy!—not you—not you!" Then jumping up she seized the newspaper and ran out of the room; but the translation Lord Ulleskelf had written out fell on the floor as she left, and poor frightened Emilia fearing everything took it up eagerly.

I did not see this—at least I only remembered it afterwards, for poor Lady Jane, meeting me at the door, seized hold of my arm, saying, "Go back, go

back! Oh take me to St. Julian!" The poor thing was quite distraught for some minutes. I took her to her room and tried to quiet her, and then I went, as she asked me, to look for my cousin. I ran down by the back way and the little staircase to the studio. It was empty, except that the little model and her mother were getting ready to go. The gentleman was gone, the child said; he had told her to come back next day. She was putting off her little quaint cloak, with her mother's help, in a corner of the big room. I hurried back to the house. On the stairs I found Hester, with her companion, and my mistress at the head of the stairs. Hester and Hexham both turned to me, and my mistress eagerly asked whether I had found St. Julian. I do not know how it was—certainly at the time I could not have described what was happening before my eyes; but afterwards, thinking things over, I seemed to see a phantasmagoria of the events of the day passing before my eyes. I seemed to see the look of motherly sympathy and benediction with which, in all her pain for Emilia, Mrs. St. Julian turned to her Hester. I don't know if the two young folks had spoken to her. They were standing side by side, as people who had a right to one another's help; and afterwards, when I was alone, Hester's face came before me, sad, troubled, and yet illumined by the radiance of a new-found light.

I suppose excitement is a mood which stamps events clearly-marked and well-defined upon our minds. I think for the most part our lives are more wonderful, sadder, and brighter, more beautiful and picturesque, than we have eyes to see or ears to understand, except at certain moments when a crisis comes to sti-

slow hearts, to brighten dim eyes to sight, and dull ears to the sounds that vibrate all about. So it is with happy people, and lookers-on at the history of others: for those who are in pain a merciful shadow falls at first, hiding, and covering, and tempering the cruel pangs of fear and passionate regret.

. XI.

Emmy read the paper quite quietly, in a sort of dream: this old crumpled paper, lying on the table, in which she saw her husband's name printed. Her first thought was, why had they kept it from her? Here was news, and they had not given it. Bevis Beverley! She even stopped for an instant to think what a pretty, strange name it was; stopped wilfully, with that sort of instinct we all have when we will not realise to ourselves that something of ill to those we love is at hand. Then she began to read, and at first she did not quite understand. A shooting-party had gone up the Paraná River; the boat was supposed to have overturned. The names, as well as they could gather, were as follows:—Don Manuel da Costa, Mr. P. Dubois, Mr. Bevis Beverley of the English Embassy, Mr. Stanmore, and Señor Antonio de Caíta,—of whom not one had been saved. Emilia read it once quietly, only her heart suddenly began to beat, and the room to swing round and round; but even in the bewildering circles she clutched the paper and forced herself to read the dizzy words again. At first she did not feel very much, and even for an instant her mind glanced off to something else—to her mother waiting down below

with little Bevis in her lap—then a great dark cloud began to descend quietly and settle upon the poor little woman, blotting out sunlight and landscape and colour. Emilia lost mental consciousness as the darkness closed in upon her, not bodily consciousness. She had a dim feeling as if someone had drawn a curtain across the window, so she told me afterwards. She was sitting in her mother's room, this she knew; but a terrible, terrible trouble was all about her, all around, everywhere, echoing in the darkness, and cold at her heart. Bevis, she wanted Bevis or her mother: they could send it away; and with a great effort she cried out, "Mamma! mamma!" And at that instant somebody who had been talking to her, but whom she had not heeded, seemed to say, "Here she is," and in a minute more her mother's tender arms were round her, and Emilia coming to herself again looked up into that tender, familiar face.

"My darling," said the mother, "you must hope, and trust, and be brave. Nothing is confirmed; and we must pray and love one another, and have faith in a heavenly mercy. If it had been certain, do you think I should have kept it from you all this time!"

"How long?" said the parched lips; and Emilia turned in a dazed way from Mrs. St. Julian to Lady Jane, who had come back, and who was standing by with an odd, startled face, looking as pale almost as Emmy herself.

"Oh, Emmy, dear, dear Emmy, don't believe it: we have had a letter since. I shall never forgive myself as long as I live—never! I left it out; that hateful paper. Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!" sobbed poor

Lady Jane, once more completely overcome, as she sank into a chair and hid her face in her hands.

Little Emilia made a great effort. She got up from her seat with a piteous look; she went up to her sister-in-law and put her hand on her shoulder. "Don't cry, Jane," she said, trembling very much. "Mamma says there is hope; and Bevis said I was to try and make the best of things. I had rather know," said poor Emilia, turning sick and pale again. "May I see your letter?"

Lady Jane was almost overawed by the gentle sweetness of these two women.

"How can you think of me just now? Oh, Emilia! I—I don't deserve it!" And she got up and a second time rushed out of the room.

Emmy's wonderful gentleness and self-control touched me more than I can express. She did not say much more, but went back to her mother, and knelt down and buried her face in her knees in a childish attitude, kneeling there still and motionless, while all the bright light came trembling and shining upon the two bent heads, and the sound of birds and of bleating sheep and shouting children came in at the open windows. I thought they were best alone, and left them, shutting the door. The house was silent and empty of the life which belonged to it, only it seemed to me crowded to suffocation by this great trouble and anxiety. This uncertainty was horrible. How would the time pass until the next mail came due? I was thankful from my heart to think that half the time had passed. Only I felt now at this moment that I must breathe, get out upon the downs, shake off the overpowering sense of sorrow, I could not but feel

frightened too now; but there is no more danger than there was yesterday."

I could not help thinking there was some sense in Lady Jane's cheerful view of things: after all it was the barest uncertainty and hint of evil, when all round, on every side, dangers of every sort were about each one of those whom we loved, from which no loving cares or prayers could shield them: a foot slips, a stone falls, and a heart breaks, or a life is ended, and what then? . . . A horrible vision of my own child—close, close to the edge of the dreadful cliff, came before me. I was nervous and infected too, with sad terrors and presentiments which the sight of the poor sweet young wife's misery had suggested.

Lady Jane, in her odd, decided way, said she must come out too. She could not bear the house, she could not bear to see the others.

She walked beside me with firm, even footsteps, occasionally telling me one thing and another of her favourite brother. Her flow of talk was interrupted: the real true heart within her seemed stirred by an unaffected sympathy for the trouble of the people with whom she was living. Her face seemed kindled, the hard look had gone out of it; for the first time I could imagine a likeness between her and her brother, and I began to feel a certain trust and reliance in this strange, wayward woman. After a little she was quite silent. We had a dreary little walk, pacing on together along the lane: how long the way seemed, how dull the hedges looked, how dreary the road! It seemed as if our walk had lasted for hours, but we had been out only a very little time. When we came in there was a three-cornered note addressed to Lady

Jane lying on the hall table. "A gentleman brought it," said the parlour maid; and I left Lady Jane to her correspondence, while I ran up to see how my two dear women were going on.

The day lagged on slowly: Emmy had got her little Bevis with her, and was lying-down in her own room while he played about. Mrs. St. Julian came and went, doing too much for her own strength; but I could not prevent her. She put me in mind of some bird hovering about her nest, as I met her again and again standing wistful and tender by her daughter's door, listening, and thinking what she could do more to ease her pain.

In the course of the afternoon St. Julian, who had been out when all this happened — having suddenly dismissed his model, and gone off for one of the long solitary tramps to which he was sometimes accustomed — came home to find the house in sad confusion. I think his presence was better medicine for Emmy than her mother's tender, wistful sympathy.

"I don't wonder at your being very uncomfortable," he said; "but I myself think there is a strong probability that your fears are unfounded. Bevis says most distinctly that he has refused to join the expedition. His name has been talked of: that is enough to give rise to a report that he is one of the party. . . . I would give you more sympathy if I did not think that it won't be wanted, my dear." He pulled her little hand through his arm as he spoke, and patted it gently. He looked so tender, so encouraging, so well able to take care of the poor little thing, she clung to him closer and closer.

"Oh, my dearest papa," she said, "I will try, in-

deed I will!" And she hid her face, and tried to choke down her sobs.

I had prepared a beautiful tea for them, but neither Mrs. St. Julian nor Emilia appeared. Lady Jane came down, somewhat subdued, trying to keep up a desultory conversation, as if nothing had happened, which vexed me at the moment. Even little Bevis soon found out that something was wrong, and his little voice seemed hushed in the big wooden room.

And then the next day dawned, and another long day lagged on. St. Julian would allow no change to be made in the ways of the house. He was right, for any change would but have impressed us all more strongly with the certainty of misfortune. On Thursday we should hear our fate. It was but one day more to wait, and one long, dark interminable night. Hexham did not mean to leave us: on the contrary, when St. Julian made some proposal of the sort, he said, in true heart-tones, "Let me stay; do not send me away. Oh! St. Julian, don't I belong to you? I don't think I need tell you now that the one great interest of my life is here among you all." The words touched St. Julian very much, and there could be no doubt of their loyalty. "Let him stay, papa," said Hester, gently. In his emotion the young man spoke out quite openly before us all. It was a time which constrained us all to be simple, from the very strength of our sympathy for the dear, and gentle, and stricken young wife above.

Little Bevis came down before dinner, and played about as usual. I was touched to see the tenderness which they all showed to him. His grandfather let

him run into his studio, upset his colour-pots, turn over his canvasses—one of them came down with a great sound upon the floor. It was the picture of the two women at the foot of the beacon waiting together in suspense. Bevis went to bed as usual, and we dined as usual, but I shall never forget that evening, how endless and interminable it seemed. After dinner St. Julian, who had been up to see Emmy in her room, paced up and down the drawing-room, quite unnerved for once. "My poor child," he kept repeating; "my poor child!"

The wind had arisen: we could hear the low roar of the sea moaning against the shingle; the rain suddenly began to pour in the darkness outside, and the fire burnt low, for the great drops came down the chimney. Hexham did his best to cheer us. He was charming in his kindness and thoughtfulness. His manner to Hester was so tender, so gentle, at once humble and protecting, that I could only wonder that she held out as she did against its charm. She scarcely answered him, scarcely looked at him. She sat growing paler and paler. Was it that it seemed to her wrong, when her sister was in such sorrow and anxiety, to think of her own happiness, or concerns? It was something of this, for once in the course of the evening I heard her say to him,—

"I cannot talk to you yet. Will you wait?"

"A lifetime," said Hexham, in a low moved voice.

Hexham went away to smoke with St. Julian. I crossed the room and sat down by Hester, and put my arms round her. The poor child leant her head upon my shoulder. Lady Jane was with Emilia, who had sent for her. Long after they had all gone up sad

and wearily to their rooms, I sat by the fire watching the embers burn out one by one, listening to the sudden gusts of wind against the window-pane, to the dull rush of the sea breaking with loud cries and sobs.

All the events of the day were passing before me, over and over again: first one troubled face, then another; voice after voice echoing in my ears. Was there any hope anywhere in Hester's eyes? I thought; and they seemed looking up out of the fire into my own, as I sat there drowsily and sadly.

It was about two o'clock, I think, when I started; for I heard a sound of footsteps coming. A tall white-robed woman, carrying a lamp, came into the room, and advanced and sat down beside me. It was poor Lady Jane. All her cheerfulness was gone, and I saw now what injustice I had done her, and how she must have struggled to maintain it; she looked old and haggard suddenly.

"I could not rest," she said. "I came down—I thought you might be here. I couldn't stay in my room listening to that dreadful wind." Poor thing, I felt for her. I made up the fire once more, and we two kept a dreary watch for an hour and more, till the wind went down and the sea calmed, and Lady Jane began to nod in her arm-chair.

XII.

I awoke on the Thursday morning, more ho than I had gone to bed. I don't know why, for was no more reason to hope either more or less there had been the night before. On Thursday c Friday the French mail would come with news: was our one thought. We still tried to go on as t as if nothing was the matter. The bells rang, the vants came and went with stolid faces. It is ho to say, but already at the end of these few intermi hours it seemed as if we were getting used to this state of things. Emilia still kept upstairs. Lady paced about in her restless way: from one room t other, from one person to another, she went. S times she would burst out into indignation ag Lady Mountmore, who had driven poor Bevis t She had influenced his father, Lady Jane declared, prevented him from advancing a certain sum whic had distinctly promised to Bevis before his mar "A promise is a promise," said Lady Jane, "The boy was too proud to ask for his rights. He went, I do believe, to escape that horrid Ephraim. behaved like brutes, every one of us. I am ju bad as the rest," said the poor lady.

It was as she said. One day in June, wher Minister had sent to Mr. F., of the Foreign Offic ask who was next on the list of Queen's messen it was found that the gentleman first in order been taken ill only the day before; the second him was making up his book for the Derby year.

Poor Bevis—who was sitting disconsolately wondering how it would be possible to him to take up that bill of Ephraim's, which was daily appearing more terrible and impossible to meet—had heard St. Gervois and De Barty, the two other men in his room, discussing the matter, and announcing in very decided language their intention of remaining in London for the rest of the season, instead of starting off at a moment's notice with despatches to some unknown President in some unknown part of South America.

Bevis said nothing, but got up and left the room. A few minutes after he came back looking very pale. "You fellows," he said, "I shall want you to do a few things for me. I start for Rio to-morrow."

"Mr. St. Gervois told me all about it," poor Lady Jane said, with a grunt, as she told me the story.

This sudden determination took the Mountmores and Mr. Ephraim by surprise, and as I have said, it was on this occasion that Lady Jane spoke up on her brother's behalf, and that Emilia, after his departure, was formally recognised by his family. "If he,—when he comes back," cried Lady Jane, in a fume, "my father, in common decency, must increase his allowance." A sudden light came into her face as she spoke. The thought of anything to do or to say for Bevis was a gleam of comfort to the poor sister.

All that day was a feverish looking for news. St. Julian had already started off to London that morning in search of it. Once I saw the telegraph-boy from Tarmouth coming along the lane. I ran down eagerly, but Lady Jane was beforehand, and had pocketed the despatch which the servant had brought her. "It is nothing," she said, "and only concerns me." A certain

conscious look seemed to indicate Sigourney. But I asked no questions. I went on in my usual plodding way, putting by candles and soap, serving out sugar. Sometimes now when I stand in the store-closet I remember the odd double feeling with which I stood there that Thursday afternoon, with my heart full of sympathy, and then would come a sudden hardness of long use to me, looking back at the storms of life through which I had passed. A hard, cruel feeling, of the inevitable laws of fate came over me. What great matter was it: one more life struck down, one more innocent happiness blasted, one more parting; were we not all of us used to it, was anyone spared ever? . . . One by one we are sent forth into the storm, alone to struggle through its fierce battlings till we find another shelter, another home, where we may rest for a little while, until the hour comes when once more we are driven out. It was an evil frame of mind, and a thankless one, for one who had found friends, a shelter, and help when most in need of them. As I was still standing among my stores that afternoon, Aileen came to the door, looking a little scared. "Queenie," she said, "Emilia is not in her room. Lady Jane, too, has been out for ever so long. Her maid tells me that she had a telegraphic message from that Captain Sigourney. Is it not odious of her now, at such a time? Oh, she can't have—can't have——"

"Eloped?" I said, smiling. "No, Aileen, I do not think there is much fear."

As time went on, however, and neither of them reappeared, I became a little uneasy. Lady Jane's maid when questioned knew nothing of her mistress's intentions. Bevis was alone with his nurse, contentedly

stocking a shop in his nursery out of her work-box. But it was not for Lady Jane that I was anxious—she could take care of herself; it was Emilia I was looking for. I put on my bonnet, and set off to try and find her. Hester and Hexham said they would go towards Ulleshall, and see if she was there.

I walked up the down, looking on every side. I thought each clump of furze was Emilia; but at last, high up by the beacon, I saw a dark figure against the sky.

Yes, it was Emilia up there, with beaten garments and with wind-blown hair. She had unconsciously crouched down to escape the fierce blast. She was looking out seawards, at the dull tossing horizon. It seemed to me such an image of desolation that it went to my heart to see her so. I called her by her name, and ran up and put my hand upon her shoulder.

"My dear," I said, "we have been looking for you everywhere."

Emilia gave a little start. She had not heard me call.

"I could not rest at home," she said. "I don't know what brought me here. I think I ran almost all the way."

She spoke with a trembling desperateness that frightened me. Two nights of sleeplessness, and these long maddening hours, were enough to daze the poor child. If she were to break down? But gentle things like Emilia bend and rise again.

"Come home now, dear Emilia," I said; "it is growing dark. Your mother will be frightened about you."

"Ah! people are often frightened when there is nothing to fear," said Emilia, a little strangely.

I could see that she was in a fever. Her cheeks were burning, while I was shivering: for the cold winds came eddying from the valley, and sweeping round and round us, making the beacon creak as they passed. The wind was so chill, the sky so grey, and the green murky sea so dull at our feet, that I longed to get her away. It seemed to me much later than it really was. The solitude oppressed me. There was no life anywhere—no boats about. Perhaps they were lost in the mist that was writhing along from the land, and spreading out to sea. I cannot say why it was so great a relief to me at last to see one little dark speck coming across the straits where the mist was not drifting. The sight of life—for boats are life to people looking out with lonely eyes—this little dark grey speck upon the waters seemed to me to make the blast less dreary, and the lonely heights less lonesome.

We began our walk back in silence. Emilia's long blue cloak flapped in the wind, but I pulled it close about her. She let me do as I liked. She didn't speak. Once I said to her,—“Emilia, do you know, when I came up just now, I thought you looked like the picture your father painted. Do you remember it?”

“I—I forget,” said poor Emilia, turning away her face suddenly. All her strength seemed to have left her; her limbs seemed scarcely able to drag along; her poor little feet slipped and stumbled on the turf and against the white chalk-stones. I put my arm round her waist and helped her along as best I could, as we crept down the side of the hill.

"I think I cannot walk because my heart is so heavy," said Emilia once in her childish way, and her head dropped on my shoulder. I hardly can tell what I feared for her, or what I hoped. Sleeplessness and anxiety were enemies too mighty for this helpless little frame to encounter.

I was confused and frightened, and I took a wrong turning. It brought us to the end of a field where a gate had once stood, which was now done away with. We could not force through the hedges and the palings: there was nothing to do but to turn back. It seems childish to record, but when I found that we must retrace so many of our weary steps, stumbling back all the way, in one of those biting gusts of wind, I burst out crying from fatigue, and sympathy, and excitement. It seemed all so dreary and so hopeless. Emilia roused herself, seeing me give way. Poor child, her sweet natural instincts did not desert her, even in her own bewildered pain. She took hope suddenly, trying to find strength to help me.

"Oh, Queenie," she said. "Think if we find, tomorrow, that all is well, and that all this anxiety has been for nothing. But it could not be for nothing, could it?" she said.

It is only another name for something greater and holier than anxiety, I thought: but I could not speak, for I was choking, and I had not yet regained command of my own voice. Our walk was nearly over; we got out on to the lane, and so approached our home. At the turn of the road I saw a figure standing looking for us. A little figure, with hair flying on the gale, who, as we appeared, stumbling and weary, sprang forward to meet us; then suddenly stopped,

turned, and fled, with fluttering skirts and arms outstretched, like a spirit of the wind. I could not understand it, nor why my little Missie (for it was her) should have run away. Even this moment's sight of her, in the twilight, did me good and cheered me. How well I remember it all. The dark rustling hedges, a pale streak of yellow light in the west shining beyond the hedge, and beyond the stem of the hawthorn-tree. It gleamed sadly and weirdly in the sky, among clouds of darkness and vaporous shadows; the earth reflected the light faintly at our feet, more brightly in the garden, which was higher than the road. Emilia put out her hand, and pulled herself wearily up the steps which led to the garden. It was very dark, but in the light from the stormy gleam she saw something which made her cry out. I myself pulled Emilia back, with some exclamation, being still confused and not knowing what dark figure it was standing before me in the gloaming; but Emilia burst away from me with a cry, with a low passionate sob. She flew from me straight into two arms that caught her. My heart was beating, my eyes were full of tears, so that I could scarcely see what had happened.

But I heard a low "Bevis! Oh, Bevis!" For a moment I stood looking at the two standing clinging together. The cold wind still came in shrill gusts, the grey clouds still drifted, the sun-streak was dying: but peace, light, love unspeakable were theirs, and the radiance from their grateful hearts seemed to overflow into ours.

XIII.

"Where is Lady Jane?" interrupted Hexham, coming home in the twilight, from a fruitless search with Hester, to hear the great news. It was so great, so complete, so unexpected, that we none of us quite realised it yet. We were strangely silent; we looked at each other: some sat still; the younger ones went vaguely rushing about the house, from one end to the other. Aileen and Missie were like a pair of mad kittens, dancing and springing from side to side. It was pretty to see Hester rush in, tremulous, tender, almost frightened by the very depth of her sympathy. The mother was holding Emilia's hand, and turning from her to Bevis.

"Oh, Bevis, if you knew what three days we have spent," said Hester, flinging her arms round him.

"Don't let us talk about it any more," said he, kissing her blooming cheek, and then he bent over the soft mother's hand that trembled out to meet his own.

It was not at first that we any of us heard very clearly what had happened, for Emilia turned so pale at first when her husband began speaking of that fatal expedition in the boat up the Paraná River, that he abruptly changed the subject, and began describing the road from London to Tarmouth, instead of dwelling on his escape from the accident, or the wonders of that country from whence he had come—an unknown land to us all, of mighty streams and waving verdure; of great flowers, and constellations, and mysterious

splashings and stirrings along the waters: Emmy turned pale, and Bevis suddenly began to describe his journey from Waterloo to Tarmouth, and his companion from London.

"A fellow gets suspicious," said honest Bevis, recounting his adventure. "But I can't understand the fellow now. He seemed dodging me about, and I only got away from him by a chance. I don't mind so much now that I have seen you, little woman. Ephraim may have a dozen writs out against me, for all I know. I thought there was something uncomfortable about the man the moment I saw him; and I asked the porter at the Foreign Office not to tell him anything about me. I may have been mistaken," Bevis ended, shrugging his shoulders, "since here I am. But if not to-day, that confounded old Ephraim will have me to-morrow. I only put off the evil day by running away. Well, I've brought back Jane's hundred pounds, and I have seen my little woman again, and the boy, and all of you, and now I don't care what happens."

"Hush," said Mrs. St. Julian: "my husband must help you. Your father has written to him. You should have come to us."

"I believe I acted like a fool," said Beverley, penitently. "Perhaps I fancied things worse than they were. I couldn't bear to come sponging on St. Julian, and I was indignant at the things they said at home, and—is Jane here, do you say?"

We were all getting seriously uneasy? Lady Jane had disappeared. Her maid brought in a telegram she had found in her room, which seemed to throw some vague light upon her movements.

"Captain Sigourney, Waterloo Station, to Lady Jane Beverley, Tarmouth, Broadshire."

"I implore you to meet me at Tarmouth. I come by the four o'clock boat. I have news of your brother.

("Signed) SIGOURNEY."

"Sigourney!" cried Bevis, "who the devil is Sigourney?"

There was a dead silence, and nobody knew exactly what to say next. All our anxiety and speculation were allayed before dinner by the return of the pony-carriage with a hasty note from Lady Jane herself!

"Dearest Mrs. St. Julian,—Kind Captain Sigourney has been to London enquiring for us. He has heard confidentially, from a person at the Foreign Office, that my brother *has been heard of* by this mail. He thought it best to come to me straight, and I have decided to go off to London immediately. I shall probably find my father at home in Bruton Street. I will write to-morrow. Fond love to dearest Emilia.

"Your affectionate, anxious

"JANE BEVERLEY."

"But what does it all mean?" cried Bevis, in a fume. "What business has Captain Sigourney with my safety?" And it was only by degrees that he could be appeased at all.

"This fire won't burn!" cried Missie.

There is a little pine-wood growing not far from the Lodges, where Aileen and Missie sometimes boil a kettle and light a fire of dry sticks, twigs, and fir-cones. The pine-wood runs up the side of a steep hill that leads to the down. In the hollow below lie bright pools glistening among wet mosses and fallen leaves and pine-twigs; but the abrupt sides of the little wood are dry and sandy, and laced and overrun by a network of slender roots that go spreading in every direction. In between the clefts and jagged fissures of the ground the sea shines, blue and gleaming, while the white ships, like birds, seem to slide in between the branches. The tea-party was in honour of Bevis's return, the little maidens said. They had transported cups and cloths, pats of butter and brown loaves, all of which good things were set out on a narrow ledge; while a little higher, the flames were sparkling, and a kettle hanging in the pretty thread of smoke. Missie, on her knees, was piling sticks and cones upon the fire; Aileen was busy spreading her table; and little Bevis was trotting about picking up various little shreds and stones that took his fancy, and bringing them to poke into the bright little flame that was crackling and sparkling and growing every moment more bright.

Bevis and Emilia were the hero and heroine of the entertainment. Hexham was fine, Aileen said, and would not take an interest, and so he was left with Hester pasting photographs in the dining-room, while the rest of us came off this bright autumnal afternoon to camp in the copse. The sun still poured unwearied over the country, and the long delightful summer seemed

unending. It was during this picnic tea-drinking that I heard more than I had hitherto done of Mr. Beverley's adventures.

"This kettle *won't* boil!" said Missie.

And while Bevis was good-naturedly poking and stirring the flames, Emilia began in a low, frightened voice:—"Oh, Queenie, even now I can hardly believe it. He has been telling me all about it. He finished his work sooner than he expected. The poor General was shot with whom he was negotiating: he found that there was nothing more for him to do, and that he might as well take his passage by the very next ship. And then, to pass the time, he went off with those other poor men for a couple of days' shooting, and then they met a drove of angry cattle swimming across the stream, and they could not get out of the way in time, and two were drowned," faltered Emilia; "but when dear Bevis came to himself, he had floated a long way down the stream. He had been unconscious, but bravely clinging to an oar all the time . . . and then he scrambled on shore and wandered on till he got to a wooden house belonging to two young men, who took him in,—but he had had a blow on the head, and he was very ill for three days, and the steamer was gone when he got back to Rio—and that was how it was."

As she ceased she caught hold of little Bevis, who was trotting past her, and suddenly clutched him to her heart. How happy she was! a little frightened still, even in her great joy, but with smiles and lights in her radiant face,—her very hair seemed shining as she sat under the pine-trees, sometimes looking up at her husband, or with proud eyes following Bevy's little dumping figure as he busily came and went.

"Here is Hexham, after all," cried big Bevis from the heights, looking down as he spoke, and Hexham's head appeared from behind a bank of moss and twigs.

"Why, what a capital gipsy photograph you would all make," cried the enthusiastic Hexham as he came up. "I have brought you some letters. Hester is coming directly with William St. Julian, who has just arrived."

"I really don't think we can give you all cups," said Aileen, busily pouring from her boiling kettle into her teapot. "You know I didn't expect you."

Bevis took all the letters and began to read them out:—

I.

"Lord Mountmore to the Hon. Bevis Beverley.

"Friday.

"My dear Boy,—The news of your safe return from Rio has relieved us all from a most anxious state of mind. You have had a providential escape, upon which we most warmly and heartily congratulate you. With regard to the subject of your letter, I am willing to accede to your request, and to allow you once more the same sum that you have always had hitherto. I will also assist you to take up the bill, if you will give me your solemn promise never to have anything more to do with the Jews. Jane has pleaded your cause so well that I cannot refuse her. My lady desires her love.

"Your affectionate father,

"M——.

"Jane is writing, so I send no message from her. She arrived, poor girl, on Thursday in a most distressed state of mind. I hope we shall see you here with your friends before long."

II.

known Friend, Ch. Coll., Cambridge, to George Hexham, Esq., The Island, Tarmouth.

"My dear George,—I have been expecting this letter ever since I received your last, from which, by the bye, one page was missing. Farewell, O friend of my bachelorhood. Seriously, I long to see you, and to do all about it. I must also beg to congratulate the dear Mrs. Hexham upon having secured the affections of one of the best and truest-hearted of men. I have no doubt she fully deserves her good fortune.

"Ever, my dear fellow, affectionately yours,
"—— ———."

III.

*Mrs. William St. Julian, Kensington Square,
to Mrs. St. Julian, Tarmouth.*

"My dearest Mrs. St. Julian,—I send this by William, who cannot rest until he has seen you all and told you how heartfelt are our sympathies and congratulations. How little we thought, as we drove off on Monday morning, of all that was at hand. It seems very *unfeeling* as I look back now. I shall feel quite nervous

until William comes back, but he has promised to take a return-ticket to reassure me. I am quite surprised by the news you send me this morning of Hester's engagement. I always had my own ideas, though I did not speak of them (we quiet people often see a good deal more than people imagine), and I quite expected that Lady Jane would have been the lady. However, it is much better as it is, and Mr. Hexham is, I have no doubt, all you could wish for dear Hester. Do give my best and kindest congratulations to dear Emilia. How delighted she must have been to get the good news of her husband's safety. I hope it was not too much for her,—excitement is very apt to knock one up. The children send a hundred loves and kisses.

“Believe me,

“Your affectionate daughter,

“MARGARET ST. JULIAN.”

“P.S.—I have had a visit from a very delightful Captain Sigourney. He called upon me to ask for news of you all. It seems he escorted Lady Jane to town, and that in consequence of information he had received at the Foreign Office he was able to be of great service to her, although the information afterwards turned out incorrect. A person there had assured him that Mr. Beverley had been in town some time, and had returned to South America for good. What strange reports get about! One should be very careful never to believe anybody.”

AN EASTER HOLIDAY.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark! the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours, that past in bridal white
And died to live. . . .—MAUD.

It is late to begin to write of Easter holidays and holiday makers when Easter is past and the holidays are rapidly coming to an end—when all the people who only yesterday, in a glamour of sunshine and gaiety, were to one another distant figures dotting the cliffs, groups upon the beach, couples strolling on the smooth lawn of the hotel, or voices calling from unseen places through the clear spring air, are now commonplace, uninteresting men and women again, picking up their portmanteaus and bags, disputing over their bills, and driving away in frys and breaks from the platform, where the same railway carriages and carriages which conveyed so many to ease and pleasant hours, now wait, remorseless and unrelenting, to carry willing victims back to desks, pulpits, pupil-rooms, consultations, household duties, social cares, clerks, and office paper, and red tape.

For the last week or so it has seemed to some of us as if a sort of millennium had set in in many places. Lawyers have been disporting themselves, suddenly freed, as if by magic, from the blue bags and

tin boxes to which they are usually chained, Prometheus-like, by strings of red tape. Clergymen, without their pulpits, have been climbing the cliffs with surprising agility, their white neckcloths gleaming in the sun and marking them distinct from other men. Pupils have ceased to be altogether in this happy hour and are transformed into the well-loved Toms and Harrys of home and domestic life. Illnesses and patients have also vanished out of sight; although the doctors do not quite put aside their professional manner with their practice, and walk in a brisk and business-like way along the seashore, or alertly read the "Times," cross-legged, upon the benches in front of their hotels. Here at F——, if one may be allowed to instance one place among the rest, there have been students from Oxbridge and Camford. Two might dons have come down from their high places, and may be seen looking at the primroses in the lane while in the adjoining field a painter, whose name is reckoned high among his compeers, is with some boy leaping over a cat-gallows; and a councillor who has forgotten the cares of empire for a while, is strolling in the shade of a hedgerow, and repeating odes to Horace to a young companion.

Horace would have most certainly written an ode or two if he had come to F——. He would have liked the pine-wood on the hillside, where the rivulet bubbles from its source, and where you climb among trees, across mosses starred with primroses and tiny dog-violets, and as you climb you see the horizon between the flaked stems of the pines, until at last you come out upon a wide down which reaches to the summit of the hill.

But, in truth, we have no need of Horace here to tell us of "groves of pine on either hand," to teach us how to look for "the shining steps." For the Lord of the Manor of Faringford has written of these full-toned seas and breaking waves, "these happy blossoming shores," and "thymy promontories," "where the rainbow lives in the curve of the land," "and the golden chords run up the ridged sea."

Only yesterday, I think, two countrymen who were driving stakes, ceased their work for a while to tell us, "They were a-putten up of a fence to keep Misterr Tennyson's sheep from strayen—for he wer Lord of the Manor, he wer, and the sheep wer always goen astray."

It seems almost as if the song of poets came to life upon some spring days and took visible form and voice and being. Rhythm, music, the great flow of their melodies, the secrets of their philosophy, are vibrating all round and about. One seems to learn the meaning of many a poem by heart as one lies on the hill-side in the sunshine. A bumble-bee buzzes by and floats away down the slope over sweet gorse, thrift, wild thyme, rock-roses, violets, and soft green grass. A chorus of piping, whistling, thrilling, chirruping, twittering mounts from all the hedges and copses at our feet, a soft wind from the sea comes blowing into our faces, while the distant sound of the waves washing against the shore down below seems to flow like an accompaniment to the concert of the birds. Townbred folks cannot tell the different notes and instruments of the concerts, but there is a very sweet piping to the measure of "Come hither! come hither!" and then among the many, one clear note (a

nightingale's most likely) struck over and over again with wonderful vivacity and sweetness. Meanwhile the sun streams over the country; far away, water and landscape, towers and villages, are tender with sudden lights, and everything thrills in answer to the first touch of spring; the leaves are budding, and black-thorn blossoms flowering on the bare branches, and rivers of tender green go flooding over the land, and reaching even into dark city courts where the grass sprouts greenly between the stones, and the poor little flower in the garret windows begins to put out its feeble shoots.

And as this season comes on beneficent, silent, and bountiful for us, another also begins in London far away. Cabs, flys, and carriages go quicker and quicker and in more bewildering circles; linkmen suddenly emerge like gnomes out of the earth, with lanterns in their hands; the doors of the houses fly open; the ladies and gentlemen get excited, spring out from the carriages, tear off their cloaks, and begin in their turn to go whirling round and round, and as they go they drag invisible circles in their train of servants, milliners, children, governesses, tradespeople and what not, and the talk will hum on and the music jangle until the night is nearly over, and the stars begin to wane over the waking city, as they do here when the last light has been extinguished in the lattice window, and country folks lie peacefully dreaming, with their dogs whining in their sleep.

But London is four hours off, the sun is not yet set, nor the holidays quite over, and we are still safe on the hill. One tries to climb the steep flanks, slipping over the smooth turf. It is so smooth that the

furze bushes seem gliding over the precipitous sides of the down, and one wonders that the very shadows do not slide away. As we climb on, the browsing sheep first appear against the clear sky, then comes more yellow gorse, and then at last the sea from the summit of the cliff.

It lies quite calm, a pale-blue ocean, streaked with straight and solemn lines where the currents flow. The ships seem sailing in the air, for you cannot tell where the horizon finishes or where the sky begins. We stand on the edge of the cliff, listening to the strange stillness of far-away sound, to the song of the waves and the birds. All the air is swept with sunlight and the sweet smell of gorse bushes. There are no words to tell of such silence and sweetness and greatness. A gull swoops over the cliff at our feet with a sudden cry; the sheep straggle away, tinkling their bells, stopping now and then to browse the grass and the wild thyme. Faint tender scents, faint cries, wide colours flowing. A sudden awe and wonder overcome one—a thrill of exquisite calm and gratitude and comfort, like an unspoken psalm of wonder and of praise. A week ago the churches were done out for Easter with flowers and graceful garlands: now it is the whole world which seems decked and garlanded in season. Along the lanes, scattered across our path, under our feet, hanging from the branches in the woods below, flowers, and green and white blossoms are scattered. An Easter hymn is in the air.

P.S.—The councillor to whom I happened to read the beginning of the essay had not patience to hear the end, but interrupted me by quoting two verses

From an Island.

from his favourite poet. Mr. Martin has translated them into English.

Whether thy days go down
In gloom and regrets,
Or, shunning life's vain struggle for renown,
Its fevers and its frets,
Stretched on the grass, with old Falernian wine,
Thou givest the thoughtless hours, a rapture all divine . .

Where the tall spreading pine
And white-leaved poplar grow,
And, mingling their broad boughs in leafy twine,
A grateful shadow throw,
Where runs the wimpling brook in its slumberous tune,
Still murmuring, as it seems, to the hushed ear of noon.

A COUNTRY SUNDAY.

I am always well pleased with a country Sunday, and think if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution it would have been the best method that could be thought of for the polishing and civilising of mankind. . . . Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notion of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eyes of the village.—*Spectator*.

THIS does not seem less applicable now than it did in Addison's time, when perhaps men and women did not work so hard as they do now-a-days, or need the day of rest so greatly; when the village where Addison wrote was smaller than it is now; when Piccadilly was a single line of houses, looking out on fields at the back; when all the painful information, and the army of recollections and allusions which are expected from well-informed persons at every turn, were still in the future, and did not exist to trouble the lazy and haunt the ignorant; when the weeks did not come laden with letters to read and to answer, with "Times," with "Telegraphs," with "Saturday Reviews;" when there were a hundred thousand less books to cut, a hundred thousand less people coming and going, each in turn to be seen, visited, attended to, conciliated, solicited, as the case might be; when whole streets and districts round which we now labor—the dusty east wind were unbuilt and un-

thought of; when one single little welcome sheet, brought in with the tea-equipage by Betsy (who knew her mistress's tastes so well that when breakfast delayed it was because the "Spectator" had not yet come, but the water boiled, and she expected it every minute), was all that anybody was required to master before the teapot was drained.

That small sheet, short, well considered, written by the wisest penmen of the day, who took so great an interest in its little moralities, and quirks, and kindly conceits, suggested, perhaps, another publication which is at this moment in the reader's hands: but anyhow it is to be feared that a few pleasant reflections on Sir Roger de Coverley's household, or the story of Theodosius and Constantia, or a paper on the abuse of metaphors, would scarcely suffice to us jaded beings who are in pursuit of the latest intelligence from India, Asia, China, and Abyssinia, besides particulars of the American war, the speeches in the two Houses, the accidents on the railways, and the latest abuses of the day. A law should be passed to compel such people to spend at least one Sunday out of every seven in the country, where Sundays in England seem to dawn with a sweet peace and tranquillity that are inexpressibly quieting and comforting to the weary. In France people try hard to follow this advice, but we may all of us possibly remember, as a vision, the long straight roads leading from the gates of Paris, with the sun beating fierce upon the dust and the stone-heaps and the stunted trees (acacias, and such like) along the arid wayside, the grey flat horizon, the city with its white stone houses and glittering placards in the distance, the contented

people pouring out of its many barriers, and straggling along the road, or resting on the stone-heaps under their sunshades and umbrellas, while the children fill their little blouses and white pinafores with pebbles and with dust instead of flowers and grass. At the time one could not help being touched by the cheerful content of the sun-baked little groups. Father in Sunday blouse; mother in smart ribbons; grandmother in her country cap, producing the basket with the provender and sour bread; and, perhaps, a friendly gendarme with his lass coming up to join the party. Then there are Roman Sundays, steaming with incense; Scotch Sundays, when the gardener refuses to pluck fresh vegetables, and the children go to church three times; there are Sundays at sea.... But it seems to me that there can be no Sundays in the world like an English country Sunday, such as that which most of us, let us hope, can look back to at some time in our lives.

Lord Bacon in his essays used to like to describe castles in the air with commodious galleries, and servants' offices and gardens laid out to his fancy, all of which good things were far removed from many of his readers, who yet liked to read of the great man's conceits. In a humble way I too would like to describe an ideal of which most of the component parts are within anybody's reach.

The ideal Sunday should be spent at a country house not many miles from London. We will call it Pleasance. You should come to it through fresh country lanes and commons, and across broad fields where the cows are browsing. Pleasance should have a great hall through which the garden might show, and

from which the doors should lead into a library, a dining-room, a drawing-room, all with windows looking across the lawns and fields and green distant slopes and acres far away gently rising and falling. There should be scattered here and there flocks and herds, to give life and animation to the green pastures and the still waters, and close at hand a few great trees under which one or two people are strolling and enjoying the early spring. All the mists and shadows of London life are left behind, and lie in wait for them when they cross the river; here is only a bright winter's morning, the song of birds piping, among the bare branches and bushes, with sudden notes and cadences of exceeding sweetness. In the ideal country houses there should be a farm-yard, with the live toys for grown-up children: cocks that crow, hens sitting with their little bead-eyed yellow brood nestling round them. There should be cows that moo and shake their heads, and crop the grass with a pleasant crunch as you watch them in the meadow, or stand meekly in their stalls when milking-time has come, with their names, such as Cowslip, Daisy, Bluebell, painted over each pair of horns.

In the morning, instead of hurrying through the streets and past the closed shops and gin-palaces to a crowded church with high square pews and dingy windows and dust, and a fierce-looking pew-opener in a front, you wend your way quietly across the fields, where the air is sweet with coming spring, and you pass by narrow swinging gates and under elm-trees to the church door. As you enter, though it seems dim at first, and the stained glass windows temper the light, yet you have a sense of the pleasant sights

and sounds beyond the walls, of the great arch of the sky over head, of the birds joining in the chant, of the preacher without, telling in silent language of new hope, new life; of courage and endurance, of peace, and beneficence, and wisdom. There are still Sir Roger de Coverleys, thanks be to Heaven! now-a-days, though perhaps they do not stand up and publicly rebuke the sleepy and inattentive, and as soon as Lady de Coverley sees you (for our Sir Roger is a married man), she finds room for you in her big pew with a welcoming look, and makes you quite comfortable, with hassocks, and hymn-books, and psalters. Coming out of church, Lady de Coverley greets her acquaintance, and nods to the village children. There is a certain Amelia I know of, in little hob-nailed shoes, who turns her back upon the congregation, and stands stock-still, tied up in a little flannel cape. There is also a delightful little fat plough-boy in a smock, who smiles so pleasantly that we all begin to laugh in return.

You cross the fields again on your way back to Pleasance. The cows have scarcely moved. A huge pig that was grazing under a tree has shifted a little, and instead of a side view now presents its tail. The farmyard, as you pass on your way to the house, is all alive in the midday sunshine. The Cochinchina cocks and hens, looking like enchanted princes and princesses, come ambling up to meet you, shaking out their soft golden plumage. The Spanish population, and the *crève-cœurs*, black-robed, with crimson crests, are all in their respective countries, with beautiful sunset tints, purple, violet, green, and golden, showing among their feathers in the sunshine. There is a great

discussion going on among the Poles. Gallant generals, with spurs and cocked-hat and feathers, impatiently pace their confines; fiery young captains and aides-de-camp seem to be laying down the law; while the ladies, who also look very important, and are dressed in a semi-military costume, evidently join in the proceedings with the keenest interest. As for the white ducks, what do they care for anything that is going on? their Sunday is spent squatting on the grass in the field with the young Alderney calves. They see both sides of the world at once with their bright eyes, and do not trouble themselves for anybody.

Some people like to go to church a second time; some go for a long walk in the afternoon: they have only to choose. Park, and lawn, and common, hills and dales lie before them; and though the distance begins to fade into the soft grey mist of an English March, yet even the mist is gentle and beautiful, and the air is moist and refreshing, and the brown turf yields under foot with a delightful spring. I seem to forget myself, and to fancy that these are the days of the *Spectator* come back to us, when I venture to write thus at length of ducks and of brown turf, and it is time I should cease.

IN FRIENDSHIP.

Il faut dans ce bas monde aimer beaucoup de choses,
Pour savoir après tout ce qu'on aime le mieux. . . .
Il faut fouler aux pieds des fleurs à peine écloses;
Il faut beaucoup pleurer, dire beaucoup d'adieux. . .
De ces biens passagers que l'on goûte à demi
Le meilleur qui nous reste est un ancien ami.—

So says Alfred de Musset, in his sonnet to Victor Hugo: and as we live on we find out who are in truth the people that we have really loved, which of our companions belongs to us, linked in friendship as well as by the chances of life or relationship. Sometimes it is not until they are gone that we discover who and what they were to us—those “good friends and true” with whom we were at ease, tranquil in the security of their kind presence.

Some of us, the longer we live, only feel more and more that it is not in utter loneliness that the greatest peace is to be found. A little child starts up in the dark, and finding itself alone, begins to cry and toss in its bed, as it holds out its arms in search of a protecting hand; and men and women seem for the most part true to this first childish instinct as they awaken suddenly: (how strange these awakenings are, in what incongruous places and seasons do they come to us!) people turn helplessly, looking here and there for pro-

tection, for sympathy,* for affection, for charity of human fellowship; give it what name you like, it is the same cry for companionship, and terror of the death of silence and absence. Human Sympathy, represented by inadequate words, or by clumsy exaggeration, by feeble signs or pangs innumerable, by sudden glories and unreasonable ecstasies, is, when we come to think of it, among the most reasonable of emotions. It is life indeed; it binds us to the spirit of our race as our senses bind us to the material world, and makes us feel at times as if we were indeed a part of Nature herself, and chords responding to her touch.

People say that as a rule men are truer friends than women—more capable of friendship. Is this the result of a classical education? Do the foot-notes in which celebrated friendships are mentioned in brackets stimulate our youth to imitate those stately togas, whose names and discourses come travelling down to us through two thousand years, from one country to another, from one generation to another, from one language to another, until they flash perhaps into the pages of Bohn's Classical Library, of which a volume has been lent to me from the study-table on the hill? It is lying open at the chapter on friendship. "To me, indeed, though he was snatched away, Scipio still lives, and will always live; for I love the virtue of a man, and assuredly of all things that either fortune or nature has bestowed upon me, I have none which I can compare with the friendship of Scipio." So says Cicero, speaking by the mouth of Lælius and of Bohn,

* "I felt nobody to have existence at all until existing in the minds of other people, and positivism without sympathy between people . . . religion without its devotion."—A CORRESPONDENT.

and the generous thought still lives after many a transmigration, though it exists now in a world where perhaps friendship is less thought of than in the days when Scipio was mourned.* Some people have a special gift of their own for friendship; they transform a vague and abstract feeling for us into an actual voice and touch and response. As our life flows on—"a torrent of impressions and emotions bounded in by custom," a writer calls it—the mere names of our friends might for many of us almost tell the history of our own lives. As one thinks over the roll, each name seems a fresh sense and explanation to the past. Some, which seem to have outwardly but little influence on our fate, tell for us the whole hidden story of long years. One means perhaps passionate emotion, unreasonable reproach, tender reconciliation; another may mean justice, forgiveness, remorse; while another speaks to us of all that we have ever suffered, all that we hold most sacred in life, and gratitude and trust unailing. There is one name that seems to me like the music of Bach as I think of it, and another that seems to open at the Gospel of St. Mat-

* Grimoald, "chaplain to Bishop Ridley," quoted by Robert Bell in his edition of English poets, has left some quaint hobbling verses which seem to have pre-written my little article—

Friendship, flower of flowers, oh! lively sprite of life!
 Oh! sacred bond of blissful peace, the stalworth staunch of strife!
 Scipio with Lælius, didst thou conform in care
 At home, in wars, for weal and woe with equal faith to fare?
 Gisippus eke with Tyte, Damon with Pythias,
 And with Menethus' son Achill, by thee combined was.
 Eurialus and Nisus gave Virgil cause to sing;
 Of Pylades do many rhyme and of Orestes ring.
 Down Theseus went to hell, Pereth his friend to find.
 Oh! that the wives in these our days were to their mates so kind.
 Cicero the friendly man to Atticus his friend
 Of friendship wrote . . .

them. "My dearest friend," a young man wrote to his mother only yesterday, and the simple words seemed to me to tell the whole history of their lives.

"After these two noble fruits of friendship, peace in the affections, and support of the judgment, followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels. I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions," says Lord Bacon, writing in the spirit of Cicero three hundred years ago.

To be in love is a recognised state; relationship without friendship is perhaps too much recognised in civilised communities; but friendship, that best blessing of life, seems to have less space in its scheme than almost any other feeling of equal importance. Of course it has its own influence; but the outward life appears, on the whole, more given to business, to acquaintance, to ambition, to eating and drinking, than to the friends we really love: and time passes, and convenience takes us here and there, and work and worry (that we might have shared) absorb us, and one day time is no more for our friendship.

One or two of my readers will understand why it is that I have been thinking of friendship of late, and have chosen this theme for my little essay, thinking that not the least lesson in life is surely that of human sympathy, and that to be a good friend is one of the secrets that comprise most others. And yet the sacrifices that we usually make for a friend's comfort or assistance are ludicrous when one comes to think of them. "One mina, two minæ; are there settled values for friends, Antisthenes, as there are for slaves? For of slaves one is perhaps worth two minæ, another not half a mina, another five minæ, another ten."

Antisthenes agrees, and says that some friends are not even worth half a mina; "and another," he says, "I would buy for my friend at the sacrifice of all the money and revenues in the world."

I am afraid that a modern Antisthenes would think a month's income a serious sacrifice. If a friend is in trouble we leave a card at his door, or go the length of a note, perhaps. And when all is well, we go our way silent and preoccupied. We absent ourselves for months at a time without a reason, and yet all of this is more want of habit than of feeling; for, notwithstanding all that is said of the world and its pompous vanities, there are still human beings among us, and, even after two thousand years, true things seem to come to life again and again for each one of us, in this sorrow and that happiness, in one sympathy and another; and one day a vague essay upon friendship becomes the true story of a friend.

In this peaceful island from whence I write we hear Cicero's voice, or listen to *In Memoriam*, as the Friend sings to us of friendship to the tune of the lark's shrill voice, or of the wave that beats away our holiday and dashes itself upon the rocks in the little bay. The sweet scents and dazzles of sunshine seem to harmonise with emotions that are wise and natural, and it is not until we go back to our common life that we realise the difference between the teaching of noble souls and the noisy bewildered translation into life of that solemn printed silence.

Is it, then, regret for buried time,
That keener in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry through the scene to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Here, then, and at peace, and out of doors in the spring-time, we have leisure to ask ourselves whether there is indeed some failure in the scheme of friendship and in the plan of that busy to-day in which our lives are passed; over-crowded with people, with repetition, with passing care and worry, and unsorted material. It is perhaps possible that by feeling, and feeling alone, some check may be given to the trivial rush of meaningless repetition by which our time is frittered away, our precious power of love and passionate affection given to the winds.

Sometimes we suddenly realise for the first time the sense of kindness, the treasure of faithful protection that we have unconsciously owed for years, for our creditor has never claimed payment or reward, and we remember with natural emotion and gratitude that the time for payment is past; we shall be debtors all our lives long—debtors made richer by one man's generosity and liberal friendship, as we may be any day made poorer in heart by unkindness or want of truth.

Only a few weeks ago a friend passed from among us whose name for many, for the writer among the rest, spoke of a whole chapter in life, one of those good chapters to which we go back again and again. This friend was one of those who make a home of life for others, a home to which we all felt that we might come sure of a wise and unfailing welcome. The door opens, the friend comes in slowly with a welcoming smile on his pale and noble face. Where find more delightful companionship than his? We all know the

race of that charming improvised gift by which he seemed able to combine disjointed hints and shades into a whole, to weave our crude talk and ragged suggestions into a complete scheme of humorous or more serious philosophy. In some papers published a few years ago in the "Cornhill Magazine," called "Chapters in Talk," a great deal of his delightful and pleasant humour appears.

But it was even more in his society than in his writing that our friend showed himself as he was. His talking was unlike that of anybody else; it sometimes put me in mind of another voice out of the past. There was an earnest wit, a gentle audacity and simplicity of expression, that made it come home to us all. Of late, E. R. was saying he spoke with a quiet and impressive authority that we all unconsciously acknowledged, although we did not know that the end of pain was near.

Of his long sufferings he never complained. But if he spoke of himself, it was with some kind little joke or humorous conceit and allusion to the philosophy of endurance, nor was it until after his death that we knew what his martyrdom had been, nor with what courage he had borne it.

He thought of serious things very constantly, although not in the conventional manner. One of the last times that we met, he said to me, "I feel more and more convinced that the love of the Father is not unlike that of an earthly father; and that, as an earthly father, so He rejoices in the prosperity and material well-doing of his children." Another time, quoting from the "Roundabout Papers," he said suddenly

"'Be good, my dear.' Depend upon it, that is the whole philosophy of life; it is very simple."

Speaking of a friend, he said, with some emotion, "I think I love M. as well as if he were dead."

He had a fancy, that we all used to laugh over with him, of a great central building, something like the Albert Hall, for friends to live in together, with galleries for the sleepless to walk in at night.

Perhaps some people may think that allusions so personal as these are scarcely fitted for these pages; but what is there in truth more unpersonal than the thought of a wise and gentle spirit, of a generous and truthful life? Here is a life that belongs to us all; we have all been the better for the existence of the one man. He could not be good without doing good in his generation, nor speak the truth as he did without adding to the sum of true things. And the lesson that he taught us was—"Let us be true to ourselves; do not let us be afraid to be ourselves, to love each other, and to speak and to trust in each other."

Last night the moon rose very pale at first, then blushing flame-like through the drifting vapours as they rose far beyond the downs; a great blackbird sat watching the shifting shadowy worlds from the bare branch of a tree, and the colts in the field set off scampering. Later, about eleven o'clock, the mists had dissolved into a silent silver and nightingale-broken dream—in which were vaporous downs, moonlight, sweet sudden stars, and clouds drifting, like some slow flight of silver birds. L—took us to a little terrace at the end of his father's garden. All the kingdoms of the night lay spread before us, bounded by dreams. For a minute we stood listening to the sound of the monotonous

ave, and then it ceased—and in the utter silence a cockoo called, and then the nightingale began, and then the wave answered once more.

It will all be a dream to-morrow, as we stumble to the noise, and light, and work of life again. Monday comes commonplace, garish, and one can scarce believe in the mystical Sunday night. And yet this tranquil Sunday night is more true than the flashiest gas-lamp in Piccadilly. Natural things seem inspired at times, and beyond themselves, and to carry us upwards and beyond our gas-lamps; so do people seem revealed to us at times, and in the night, when there is peace.

JANE AUSTEN.

À mesure qu'on a plus d'esprit on trouve qu'il y a plus d'hommes originaux.
Les gens du commun ne trouvent pas de différence entre les hommes.
PASCAL.

"I DID not know that you were a studier of character," says Bingley to Elizabeth. "It must be an amusing study."

"Yes; but intricate characters are the most amusing. They have at least that advantage."

"The country," said Darcy, "can in general supply but few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society."

"But people themselves alter so much," Elizabeth answers, "that there is something new to be observed in them for ever."

"Yes, indeed!" cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by Darcy's manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood; "I assure you that we have quite as much of *that* going on in the country as in town."

"Everybody was surprised, and Darcy, after looking at her for a moment, turned silently away. Mrs. Bennet, who fancied she had gained a complete victory over him, continued her triumph."

These people belong to a whole world of

acquaintances, who are, notwithstanding their old-fashioned dresses and quaint expressions, more alive to us than a great many of the people among whom we live. We know so much more about them to begin with. Notwithstanding a certain reticence and self-control which seems to belong to their age, and with their odd graces and ceremonies, the ladies and gentlemen in "Pride and Prejudice" and its companion novels seem like living people out of our own acquaintance transported bodily into a bygone age represented by the half-dozen books that contain Jane Austen's works. Dear books! bright, sparkling with wit and imagination, in which the homely heroines charm, the dull hours fly, and the very bores are delightful.

Could we but study our own bores in the spirit in which Miss Austen must have contemplated hers in her country village, what a delightful world this might be! A world of Norrises; economical, great walkers, with dining-room tables to dispose of; of Lady Bertrams on easels, with their placid "Do not act anything improper, my dears; Sir Thomas would not like it;" of Bennets, Gardiners, Bateses; of Mr. Collinses; of Rushbrooks, with two-and-forty speeches apiece—a world of Mrs. Bennets. . . . Inimitable woman! she must be alive at this very moment, if we but knew where to find her, with her basket on her arm, her nods and all-importance, with Maple Grove and the Sucklings in the background. She would be much excited were she aware how highly she is said to be esteemed by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is well acquainted with Maple Grove and Selina too. It might console her for Mr. Gardiner's shabby marriage.

All these people nearly start out of the pages, so

natural and unaffected are they; and yet they never lived except in the imagination of one lady with bright eyes, who sat down some seventy years ago to an old mahogany desk in a quiet country parlour, and evoked them for us. Of her ways and belongings we read for the first time in this little memoir written half a century after her death. For the first time we seem to hear the echo of the voice, and to see the picture of the unknown friend who has charmed us so long—charmed away dull hours, created neighbours and companions for us in lonely places, and made harmless mirth. Someone said just now that many people seem to be so proud of seeing a joke at all, that they impress it upon you until you are perfectly wearied by it. Jane Austen was not of these; her humour flows gentle and spontaneous, it is no elaborate mechanism nor artificial fountain, but a bright natural little stream, rippling and trickling and sparkling every here and there in the sunshine. We should be surprised now-a-days to hear a young lady announce herself as a studier of character. From her quiet home in the country lane this one reads to us a real page from that great absorbing pathetic humorous book of human nature—a book that we can most of us understand when it is translated into plain English, but of which the quaint and illegible characters are often difficult to decipher for ourselves. It is a study which, with all respect for Darcy's opinion, must require something of country-like calm and concentration, and freedom of mind. It is difficult, for instance, for a too impulsive student not to attribute something of his own moods to his specimens instead of dispassionately contemplating them from a critical distance, or for a cold-

hearted observer to throw himself sufficiently into the spirit of those whose actions he would like to interpret.

So we gladly welcome one more glimpse of an old friend come back with a last greeting. All those who love her name and her work will prize this addition, small as it is, to their acquaintance with her. "Lady Susan" is a short story complete in itself. It is very unlike her later works in many respects, and not at all equal to them; but the "Watsons" is a delightful fragment, which might belong to any of her other histories. It is bright with talk and character and animation. It is a story which is not "Emma," and which is not "Pride and Prejudice," but something between the two, and which was written—so the Preface tells us—some years before either of them was published. In this story vague shadows of future friends seem to be passing and repassing, conversing with each other, sitting down to cards, or "jogging along the muddy road" that led to D—— in Surrey. The anteghosts, if such things exist, of a Mrs. Elton, of an Elizabeth Bennet, of a Darcy, meet us (only they are not ghosts at all) with just so much resemblance to their successors as would be found, no doubt, between one generation and another. A cup of gruel is prepared for the master of the house: perhaps that very cup—"thin, but not too thin"—was destined in a different metempsychosis to immortality; at least such immortality as a cup of gruel might reasonably expect. Emma, sweet, intelligent, with an open countenance, and bright "lively" eyes, such as Miss Austen loved to give her heroines, comes home to live with her family, in consequence of the aunt who had brought her up. She is to make her first

appearance in the neighbourhood at the D—— ball, under the chaperonage of the Edwardses. "The Edwardses were people of fortune, who lived in the town and kept their coach. The Watsons inhabited a village about three miles off, were poor, and had no close carriage; and ever since there had been balls in the place the former were accustomed to invite the latter to dine, dress, and sleep at their home, on every monthly return throughout the winter." Elizabeth, the heroine's elder sister, "whose delight in a ball was not lessened by a ten years' enjoyment," had some merit in cheerfully undertaking to drive her and all her finery over in the old chair to D——.

As the sisters go along, the eldest describes the family with a good deal of frankness. Two sisters are away. There is the peevish Margaret, who is staying with her brother at Croydon; and the scheming Penelope, who has given up a great deal of time, to no purpose as yet, to a certain asthmatic old doctor at Chichester. Elizabeth proceeds to warn her young sister against the fascinations of a certain Tom Musgrave, who has trifled with all the family affections in turn. Then she comes to her brother Sam's hopeless devotion for Mary Edwards. "A young man must think of someone," says this philosophic Elizabeth; 'and why should he not be as lucky as Robert, who has got a good wife and six thousand pounds?'

"We must not all expect to be individually lucky," replies Emma, with still truer philosophy. 'The luck of one member of a family is luck to all.'

"'Mine is all to come,' says Elizabeth, giving another sigh to the remembrance of Purvis. 'I have been unlucky enough; and I cannot say much for you.'

My aunt married again so foolishly. Well, you will have a good ball, I daresay. The next turning will ring us to the turnpike; you may see the church tower over the hedge, and the "White Hart" is close by it. I shall long to know what you think of Tom's grave.'

"Such were the last audible sounds of Miss Watson's voice before they passed through the turnpike gate, and entered on the pitching of the town, the rumbling and noise of which made further conversation most thoroughly undesirable. The old mare trotted heavily along, wanting no direction of the reins to take the right turn, and making only one blunder, proposing to stop at the milliner's, before she drew up towards Mr. Edwards's door. Mr. Edwards lived in the best house in the street, and the best in the place, if Mr. Tomlinson, the banker, might be indulged in calling his newly-erected house at the end of the town, with a shrubbery and a sweep, in the county.

"Mr. Edwards's house was higher than most of its neighbours, with four windows on each side of the door. The windows were guarded by posts and chains, and the door approached by a flight of stone steps."

Elizabeth thinks the Edwardses have "a noble house and live quite in style;" and on being admitted they are received by the lady of the house of that day as well as her daughter—"a genteel-looking girl, with her hair in papers." The papers, however, are taken off in time for the ball. Then the carriages begin to drive up, and Emma and her new friends are introduced to the assembly-room.

In passing along a short gallery to the assembly-

room, brilliant in light before them, they had been accosted by a young man, "in a morning dress and boots," standing in the doorway of a bedchamber, apparently on purpose to see them go by.

"Ah, Mrs. Edwards! how do you do? How do you do, Miss Edwards?' he cried, with an easy air. 'You are determined to be in good time, I see, as usual. The candles are but this moment lit.'

"I like to get a good seat by the fire, you know, Mr. Musgrave,' replied Mrs. Edwards.'

"I am this moment going to dress,' said he. 'I am waiting for my stupid fellow. We shall have a famous ball. The Osbornes are certainly coming. You may depend upon *that*, for I was with Lord Osborne this morning.'

And in the course of the evening the party arrives from the Castle—Lord Osborne, his mother, his tutor Mr. Howard, and others of the party, ushered in by an obsequious landlord, and attended by Mr. Tom Musgrave.

Emma resents the family wrongs by a calm curtesy later in the evening, when she is fortunate enough to attract the hero's attention. Lord Osborne and his tutor also admire her; even Lady Osborne gives her a look of complacency. Before the end of the evening the Osbornes and their train are on the move. Tom Musgrave will not remain after they have left, and announces his intention of "retreating to a remote corner of the house, ordering a barrel of oysters, and being famously snug." As he is seen no more, the authoress says we may suppose his plan to have succeeded, and may imagine him "mortifying with his barrel of oysters in dreary solitude, or gladly assisting

the landlady in her bar to make fresh negus for the happy dancers above."

This is a happy touch, and completes the picture. Tom Musgrave, with his love of effect, his good looks, his flourishes, and his easinesses and uneasinesses, is a capital character. We might, perhaps, prosecute our studies on him in the present age, where, under some different name and in other circumstances, we have certainly met him at more than one house. Emma is very uncompromising, and allows him scant measure. "But you must have liked him," says Elizabeth; "you must have been struck with him altogether."

"I do *not* like him, Elizabeth. I allow his person and air to be good, and that his manners, to a certain point,—his address rather,—is pleasing. But I see nothing else to admire in him. On the contrary, he seems very vain, very conceited, and absurdly anxious for distinction."

To which her surprised sister cries out, "My dearest Emma, you are like no one else."

Notwithstanding Emma's calm curtsey, both Lord Osborne and Tom Musgrave call upon her at Stanton, and one evening Tom Musgrave drops in unexpectedly upon the Watson party. The brother from Croydon is there with his bride, who certainly must have been first-cousin to Mrs. Elton and Mrs. Suckling of Maple Grove. Tom Musgrave loves to take people by surprise. He appears in the doorway in a traveller's wrap, "having come from London, and half a mile out of his road, merely to call for ten minutes at Stanton. In the present instance he had the additional motive of being able to tell the Miss Watsons, whom he depended on finding sitting quietly employed after

tea, that he was going home to an eight-o'clock dinner."

To please Margaret, Miss Watson invites him for the following day.

"'With the greatest pleasure,' was the first reply. In a moment afterwards, — 'That is, if I can possibly get here in time. I shoot with Lord Osborne, and therefore must not engage. You will not think of me unless you see me.' And so he departed, delighted in the uncertainty in which he had left them."

One can imagine what Miss Austen would have made of Tom Musgrave. But, indeed, the character is there complete, indicated in a few happy touches, and requiring no further amplification. A note at the end states that "when the author's sister, Cassandra, showed the manuscript of the work to some of her nieces, she also told them something of the intended story. Mr. Watson, for whom the original cup of gruel was made, was soon to die, and Emma to become dependent for a home on her sister-in-law and brother. She was to decline an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and finally to marry Mr. Howard, the tutor."

Emma Watson, and Tom Musgrave, and the whole town of D—— in Surrey belong, without a doubt, to the whole generation of Miss Austen's heroes and heroines. One would scarcely recognise Lady Susan's parentage if it were not so well authenticated. It must have been written early in life, when the author was still experimentalising (as young authors, and alas! some old authors are apt to do) with other people's characters and creations, making them talk, walk, and rehearse the play, until the real actors come on the stage; and yet even this unpublished r

sesses one special merit which gives so great a charm to Miss Austen's art. She has a gift of telling a story in a way that has never been surpassed. She rules her places, times, characters, and marshals them with unerring precision. Her machinery is simple but complete; events group themselves so vividly and naturally in her mind that, in describing imaginary scenes, we seem not only to read them, but to live them, to see the people coming and going: the gentlemen courteous and in top-boots, the ladies demure and piquant; we can almost hear them talking to one another. No retrospects; no abrupt flights; as in real life, days and events follow one another. Last Tuesday does not suddenly start into existence all out of place; nor does 1790 appear upon the scene when we are well on in '21. Countries and continents do not fly from hero to hero, nor do long and divergent adventures happen to unimportant members of the company. With Miss Austen days, hours, minutes succeed each other like clock-work; one central figure is always present on the scene, that figure is always prepared for company, Miss Edward's curl-papers are almost the only approach to dishabille in her stories. There are post-chaises in readiness to convey the characters from Bath or Lyme to Uppercross, to Fullerton, from Gracechurch Street to Meryton, as their business takes them. Mr. Knightly rides from Brunswick Square to Hartfield, by the very road that Miss Austen must have travelled in the curricule with her brother, driving to London on a summer's day. We know that it was a wet ride for Mr. Knightly, to be followed by that never-to-be-forgotten afternoon in the shrubbery, when the wind had changed into a softer quarter, the clouds were carried

off, and Emma Woodhouse, walking in the sunshine, with spirits freshened, and thoughts a little relieved, and thinking of Mr. Knightly as sixteen miles away, meets him at the garden door; and there is not one of us, I think, that must not be the happier, for the happiness that one half-hour gave to Emma and her "indifferent" lover.

There is a little extract from one of Miss Austen's letters to a niece, which shows that this careful marshalling of people and circumstances was not chance, but careful workmanship.

"Your Aunt C.," she says, "does not like desultory novels, and is rather fearful that yours will be too much so—that there will be too frequent a change from one set of people to another, and that circumstances will be sometimes introduced of apparent consequence, which will lead to nothing. It will not be so great an objection to me. I allow much more latitude than she does, and think nature and spirit cover many sins of a wandering story. . ."

But, though the sins of a wandering story may be covered, the virtues of a well-told one make themselves felt unconsciously, and without an effort. Some books and people are delightful, we can scarce tell why, yet they are not so clever as others that weary and fatigue us. It is a certain effort to read a story, however touching, that is disconnected and badly told. It is like an ill-drawn picture, of which the colouring is good. Jane Austen possessed both gifts of colour and of drawing. She could see human nature as it was; with near-sighted eyes, it is true; but, ~~having~~ seen, she could combine her picture by her and colour it from life.

In this special gift for organisation she seems almost unequalled. Her picnics are models for all future and past picnics; her combinations of feelings, of gentlemen and ladies, are so natural and life-like that reading to criticise is impossible to some of us—the scene carries us away, and we forget to look for the art by which it is recorded. How delightful the people are who play at cards, and pay their addresses to one another, and sup, and discuss each other's affairs! Take Sir Walter Elliot compassionating the navy and Admiral Baldwin—"nine grey hairs of a side and nothing but a dab of powder at top—a wretched, example of what a seafaring life can do, for men who are exposed to every climate and weather until they are not fit to be seen. It is a pity they are not knocked on the head at once, before they reach Admiral Baldwin's age. . . ."

The charm of friends in pen-and-ink is their unchangeableness. We go to them when we want them. We know where to seek them; we know what to expect from them. They are never preoccupied; they are always "at home;" they never turn their backs nor walk away as people do in real life, nor let their houses and leave the neighbourhood, and disappear for weeks together; they are never taken up with strange people nor suddenly absorbed into some more genteel society, or by some nearer fancy. Even the most volatile among them is to be counted upon. We may have neglected them; and yet when we meet again there are the familiar old friends, and we seem to find our own old selves again in their company. For us time has, perhaps, passed away; feelings have

swept by, leaving interests and recollections in their place; but at all ages there must be days that belong to our youth, hours that will recur so long as men forbear and women remember, and life itself exists. Perhaps the most fashionable 'marriage on the *tapis* no longer excites us very much, but the sentiment of an Emma or an Anne Elliot comes home to some of us as vividly as ever. It is something to have such old companions who are so young. An Emma, blooming without a wrinkle or a grey hair, after twenty years' acquaintance (she was, in truth, sixty years old when we first knew her); an Elizabeth Bennet, sprightly and charming, at over eighty years of age. . . .

"In the 'Roundabout Papers' there is a passage about the pen-and-ink friends my father loved:—

"They used to call the good Sir Walter the 'Wizard of the North.' What if some writer should appear who can write so *enchantingly* that he shall be able to call into actual life the people whom he invents? What if Mignon, and Margaret, and Goetz von Berlichingen are alive now (though I don't say they are visible), and Dugald Dalgetty and Ivanhoe were to step in at that open window by the little garden yonder? Suppose Uncas and our noble old Leather Stocking were to glide in silent? Suppose Athos, Porthos, and Aramis should enter, with a noiseless swagger, curling their moustaches? And dearest Amelia Booth, on Uncle Toby's arm; and Tittlebat Titmouse, with his hair dyed green; and all the Crummles company of comedians, with the Gil Blas troop; and Sir Roger de Coverley; and the greatest of all crazy gentlemen, the Knight of La Mancha, with his blessed squire? I say to you, I look rather wistfully towards the window, musing upon

these people. Were any of them to enter, I think I should not be very much frightened. Dear old friends, what pleasant hours I have had with them! We do not see each other very often, but when we do we are ever happy to meet. . . ."

Are not such friends as these, and others unnamed here, but who will come unannounced to join the goodly company, creations that, like some people, do actually make part of our existence, and make us the better for theirs? To express some vague feelings is to make them alive for us. Have we any one of us a friend in a Knight of La Mancha, a Colonel Newcome, a Sir Roger de Coverley? They live for us even though they may have never lived. They are, and do actually make part of our lives—one of the best and noblest parts. To love them is like a direct communication with the great and generous minds that conceived them.

It is difficult, reading the novels of succeeding generations, to determine how much each book reflects of the time in which it was written; how much of its character depends upon the mind and the mood of the writer. We know how a landscape changes as the day goes on, and how the scene brightens and gains in beauty as the shadows begin to lengthen. The clearest eyes must see by the light of their own hour. Jane Austen's hour must have been a midday hour: bright, unsuggestive, with objects standing clear, without relief or shadow. She did not write of herself, but of the manners of her time. Ours is essentially an age of men and women of natural emotion; little remains to us of starch, of powder, or courtly reserve. What we have lost in calm, in happiness, in tranquillity, we have gained in velocity. Our danger is now, not of ex-

pressing and feeling too little, but of expressing more than we feel, going beyond our mark.

It almost seems within the last fifty years as if feelings had changed so rapidly as to turn many of the butterflies back into cocoons again, wrapping them round and round with self-involved, self-inflicted experiences, from which, perhaps, some higher form of moth may start in time, if such a metempsychosis were possible in natural history.

The living writers of to-day lead us into distant realms and worlds undreamt of in the placid and easily contented gigot age. People are gifted with wider experiences, with aspirations and emotions that were never more sincerely spoken than they are now. Characters in novels are certainly more intimate with us and on less ceremonious terms than in Miss Austen's days. Jane Austen's heroines have a stamp of their own. They have a certain gentle self-respect and humour and hardness of heart in which modern heroines are a little wanting. Whatever happens they can for the most part speak of gaily and without bitterness. Love with them does not mean a passion so much as an interest—deep, silent; not quite incompatible with a secondary flirtation. Marianne Dashwood's tears are evidently meant to be dried. Jane Bennet smiles, sighs, and makes excuses for Bingley's neglect. Emma passes one disagreeable morning making up her mind to the unnatural alliance between Mr. Knightly and Harriet Smith. It was the spirit of the age, and, perhaps, one not to be unenvied. It was not that Jane Austen herself was incapable of understanding a deeper feeling. In the last-written page of her last-written book there is an expression of the deepest and truest experience,

Anne Elliot's talk with Captain Benfield is the touching utterance of a good woman's feelings. They are speaking of men and of women's affections. "You are always labouring and toiling," she says, "exposed to every risk and hardship. Your home, country, friends, all united; neither time nor life to be called your own. It would be too hard, indeed (with a faltering voice) if a woman's feelings were to be added to all this."

Farther on she says, eagerly: "'I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those who resemble you. God forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures. I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No! I believe you capable of everything good and great in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important exertion and to every domestic forbearance so long as—if I may be allowed the expression—so long as you have an object; I mean while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. *All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not court it) is that of loving longest when existence or when hope is gone.*"

"She could not immediately have uttered another sentence—her heart was too full, her breath too much oppressed."

Dear Anne Elliot!—sweet, impulsive, womanly, tender-hearted—one can almost hear her voice, pleading the cause of all true women. Jane Austen had reached the very end of her life when she wrote thus. Her words seem to ring in our ears after they have been spoken. Anne Elliot must have been Jane Austen herself, speaking for the last time. There is something

so true, so gentle about her, that it is impossible not to love her. She is the bright-eyed heroine of the earlier novels, matured, chastened, cultivated, to whom fidelity has brought only greater depth and sweetness instead of bitterness and pain.

What a difficult thing it would be to sit down and try to enumerate the different influences by which our lives have been affected—influences of other lives, of art, of nature, of place and circumstance—of beautiful sights passing before our eyes, or painful ones: seasons following in their course—hills rising on our horizons—scenes of ruin and desolation—crowded thoroughfares—sounds in our ears, jarring or harmonious—the voices of friends, calling, warning, encouraging—of preachers preaching—of people in the street below, complaining, and asking our pity! What long processions of human beings are passing before us! What trains of thought go sweeping through our brains! Man seems a strange and ill-kept record of many and bewildering experiences. Looking at oneself—not as oneself, but as an abstract human being—one is lost in wonder at the vast complexities which have been brought to bear upon it; lost in wonder, and in disappointment perhaps, at the discordant result of so great a harmony. Only we know that the whole diapason is beyond our grasp: one man cannot hear the note of the grasshoppers, another is deaf when the cannon sounds. Waiting among these many echoes and mysteries of every kind, and light and darkness, and life and death, we seize a note or two of the great symphony, and try to sing; and because these notes happen to jar, we think all is discordant hopelessness. Then come pressing onward in the crowd of life, voices

with some of the notes that are wanting to our own—voices tuned to the same key as our own, or to an accordant one; making harmony for us as they pass us by. Perhaps this is in life the happiest of all experience, and to few of us there exists any more complete ideal.

And so now and then in our lives, when we learn to love a sweet and noble character, we all feel happier and better for the goodness and charity which is not ours, and yet which seems to belong to us while we are near it. Just as some people and states of mind affect us uncomfortably, so we seem to be true to ourselves with a truthful person, generous-minded with a generous nature; the world seems less disappointing and self-seeking when we think of the just and sweet and unselfish spirits, moving untroubled among dinning and distracting influences. These are our friends in the best and noblest sense. We are the happier for their existence—it is so much gain to us. They may have lived at some distant time, we may never have met face to face, or we may have known them and been blessed by their love; but in either case their light shines from afar; distant are their graves, green in some foreign land; their life is for us and with us, its generous example; their song is for our ears, and we hear it and love it still, though the singer may be lying dead.

Some women should raise and ennoble all those who follow after—true, gentle and strong and tender, whom “to love is a liberal education,” whom to have known is a blessing in our past. Is not the “cry of the children” still ringing in our ears as it did when

the poet first uttered her noble song? Is there not a Jane of our own, whose presence is among us still?

This little book, which has come out within the last few months, tells with a touching directness and simplicity the story of this good and gifted woman, the familiar writer and companion of us all, of whose history nothing was known until this little volume appeared. It only tells the story of a country lady, of days following days tranquilly, of common events; and yet the history is deeply interesting to those who loved the writer of whom it is written; and as we turn from the story of Jane Austen's life to her books again, we feel more than ever that she was one of those true friends who belong to us inalienably—simple, wise, contented, living in others, one of those whom we seem to have a right to love. Such people belong to all human-kind by the very right of their wide and generous sympathies, of their gentle wisdom and loveableness. Jane Austen's life, as it is told by her nephew, is very touching, sweet, and peaceful. It is a country landscape, where the cattle are grazing, the boughs of the great elm-tree rocking in the wind: sometimes, as we read, they come falling with a crash into the sweep; birds are flying about the old house, homely in its simple rule. The rafters cross the whitewashed ceilings, the beams project into the room below. We can see it all: the parlour with the horsehair sofa, the scant, quaint furniture, the old-fashioned garden outside, with its flowers and vegetables combined, and along the south side of the garden the green terrace sloping away.

One may read the account of Catherine Morland's home with new interest, from the hint which is given

of its likeness to the old house at Steventon, where dwelt the unknown friend whose voice we seem to hear at last, and whose face we seem to recognise, her bright eyes and brown curly hair, her quick and graceful figure. One can picture the children who are playing at the door of the old parsonage, and calling for Aunt Jane. One can imagine her pretty ways with them, her sympathy for the active, their games and imaginations. There is Cassandra. She is older than her sister, more critical, more beautiful, more reserved. There is the mother of the family, with her keen wit and clear mind; the handsome father—"the handsome proctor," as he was called; the five brothers, and the cousins driving up the lane. Tranquil summer passes by, the winter days go by; the young lady still sits writing at the old mahogany desk, and smiling, perhaps, at her own fancies, and hiding them away with her papers at the sound of coming steps. Now, the modest papers, printed and reprinted, lie in every hand, the fancies disport themselves at their will in the wisest brains.

It must have been at Steventon—Jane Austen's earliest home—that Mr. Collins first made his appearance (Lady Catherine not objecting, as we know, to his occasional absence on a Sunday, provided another clergyman was engaged to do the duty of the day), and here, conversing with Miss Jane, that he must have made many of his profoundest observations upon human nature; remarking among other things, that resignation is never so perfect as when the blessing denied begins to lose somewhat of its value in our estimation, and propounding his celebrated theory about the usual practice of elegant females. It must

have been here, too, that poor Mrs. Bennet declared, with some justice, that once estates are entailed, one can never tell how they will go; that Mrs. Allen's sprigged muslin and John Thorpe's rodomontades were woven; that his gig was built, "curricule-hung lamps, seat, trunk, sword-case, splashboard, silver moulding, all, you see, complete. The ironwork as good as new, or better. He asked fifty guineas . . . I closed with him directly, threw down the money, and the carriage was mine.'

"'And I am sure,' said Catherine, 'I know so little of such things, that I cannot judge whether it was cheap or dear.'"

"'Neither the one nor the other,' says John Thorpe."

Mrs. Palmer was also born at Steventon—the good-humoured lady in "Sense and Sensibility" who thinks it so ridiculous that her husband never hears her when she speaks to him. We are told that Marianne and Ellinor have been supposed to represent Cassandra and Jane Austen; but Mr. Austen Leigh says that he can trace no resemblance. Jane Austen is not twenty when this book is written, and only twenty-one when "Pride and Prejudice" is first devised. There is a pretty description of the sisters' devotion to one another; of the family party; of the old place where Jane Austen spends the first five-and-twenty years of her life—Steventon, where there are hedgerows winding, with green shady footpaths within the copse; where the earliest primroses and hyacinths are found. There is the wood-walk, with its rustic seats, leading to the meadows; the church-walk leading to the church, which is far from the hum of the village, and within

sight of no habitation, except a glimpse of the grey manor-house through its circling screen of sycamores. Sweet violets, both purple and white, grow in abundance beneath its south wall. Large elms protrude their rough branches, old hawthorns shed their blossoms over the graves, and the hollow yew-tree must be at least coëval with the church."

Cousins presently come on the scene—a young, widowed Comtesse de Feuillade, flying from the Revolution to her uncle's home. She is described as a clever and accomplished woman, interested in her young cousins, teaching them French (both Jane and Cassandra knew French), helping in their various schemes, in their theatricals in the barn. She eventually marries her cousin, Henry Austen. The simple family annals are not without their romance; but there is a cruel one for poor Cassandra, whose lover dies abroad, and his death saddens the whole family-party. Jane, too, "receives the addresses" (do such things as addresses still exist?) "of a gentleman possessed of good character and fortune, and of everything, in short, except the subtle power of touching her heart." One cannot help wondering whether this was a Henry Crawford or an Elton or a Mr. Elliot, or had Jane already seen the person that even Cassandra thought good enough for her sister?

Here, too, is another sorrowful story. The sisters' fate (there is a sad coincidence and similarity in it) was to be undivided; their life, their experience was the same. Someone without a name takes leave of Jane one day, promising to come back. He never comes back: they hear of his death. The story seems even sadder than Cassandra's in its silence and un-

certainly, for silence and uncertainty are death in life to some people. . . . And yet to Jane Austen there can have been no death in life. Her sunny temper and loving heart, even though saddened, must have reflected all the love and all the sunshine in her way.

There is little trace of sentimental grief in Jane Austen's books—not one morbid word is to be found, not one vain regret. Hers was not a nature to fall crushed by the overthrow of one phase of her manifold life. Hers seems to have been a natural genius for life, if I may so speak; too vivid and genuinely unselfish to fail her in her need. She could gather every flower, every brightness, along her road. Good spirits, content, all the interests of a happy and observant nature, were hers.

It is impossible to calculate the difference of the grasp by which one or another human being realises existence and the things relating to it, nor how much more vivid sensations seem to some than to others. Jane Austen, while her life lasted, realised it, and made the best use of the gifts that were hers. Yet, when all was ending, then it was given to her to realise the change that was at hand; and as willingly as she had lived, she died. Some people seem scarcely to rise to their own ideal. Jane Austen's life, as it is told by her nephew, is beyond her work, which only contained one phase of that sweet and wise nature—the creative, observant, outward phase. For her home, for her sister, for her friends, she kept the depth and tenderness of her bright and gentle sympathy. She is described as busy with her neat and clever fingers sewing for the poor, working fanciful keepsakes for her

friends. There is the cup and ball that she never failed to catch; the spillikens lie in an even ring where she has thrown them; there are her letters, straightly and neatly folded, and fitting smoothly in their creases. There is something sweet, orderly, and consistent in her character and all her tastes—in her fondness for Crabbe and Cowper, in her little joke that she ought to be a Mrs. Crabbe. She sings of an evening old ballads to old-fashioned tunes with a low sweet voice.

Further on we have a glimpse of Jane and her sister in their mob-caps, young still, but dressed soberly beyond their years. One can imagine "Aunt Jane," with her brother's children round her knee, telling her delightful stories or listening to theirs, with never-failing sympathy. One can fancy Cassandra, who does not like desultory novels, more prudent and more reserved, and somewhat less of a playfellow, looking down upon the group with elder sister's eyes.

Here is an extract from a letter written at Steventon in 1800. The vision seems to speak as one reads the old letters quaint with the accent of near a century ago:—

"I have two messages: let me get rid of them, and then my paper will be my own. Mary fully intended writing by Mr. Charles's frank, and only happened entirely to forget it, but will write soon; and my father wishes Edward to send him a memorandum of the price of hops.

"Sunday evening.

"We have had a dreadful storm of wind in the fore part of the day, which has done a great deal of mis-

chief among our trees. I was sitting alone in the drawing-room when an odd kind of crash startled me. In a moment afterwards it was repeated. I then went to the window. I reached it just in time to see the last of our two highly-valued elms descend into the sweep!!!

"The other, which had fallen, I suppose, in the first crash, and which was nearest to the pond, taking a more easterly direction, sank among our screen of chestnuts and firs, knocking down one spruce-fir, breaking off the head of another, and stripping the two corner chestnuts of several branches in its fall. This is not all: the maple bearing the weathercock was broke in two; and what I regret more than all the rest is, that all three elms that grew in Hall's Meadow, and gave such ornament to it, are gone."

A certain Mrs. Stent comes into one of these letters "ejaculating some wonder about the cocks and hens." Mrs. Stent seems to have tried their patience, and will be known henceforward as having bored Jane Austen.

They leave Steventon when Jane is about twenty-five years of age and go to Bath, from whence a couple of pleasant letters are given us. Jane is writing to her sister. She has visited Miss A., who, like all other young ladies, is considerably genteeler than her parents. She is heartily glad that Cassandra speaks so comfortably of her health and looks: could travelling fifty miles produce such an immediate change? "You were looking poorly when you were here, and everybody seemed sensible of it. Is there any charm in a hack postchaise? But if there were, Mrs. Craven's carriage

night have undone it all." Here Mrs. Stent appears again. "Poor Mrs. Stent, it has been her lot to be always in the way; but we must be merciful, for perhaps in time we may come to be Mrs. Stents ourselves, unequal to anything and unwelcome to everybody." Elsewhere she writes, upon Mrs. ——'s mentioning that she had sent the "Rejected Addresses" to Mr. H., "I began talking to her a little about them, and expressed my hope of their having amused her. Her answer was, 'Oh, dear, yes, very much; very droll indeed; the opening of the house and the striking up of the fiddles!' What she meant, poor woman, who shall say?"

But there is no malice in Jane Austen. Hers is the charity of all clear minds; it is only the muddled who are intolerant. All who love Emma and Mr. Knightly must remember the touching little scene in which he reproves her for her thoughtless impatience of poor Miss Bates's volubility.

"'You, whom she had known from an infant, whom she had seen grow up from a period when her notice was an honour, to have you now, in thoughtless spirits and in the pride of the moment, laugh at her, humble her. . . . This is not pleasant to you, Emma, and it is very far from pleasant to me, but I must, I will, I will tell you truths while I am satisfied with proving myself your friend by very faithful counsel, and trusting that you will some time or other do me greater justice than you can do me now.'"

"While they talked they were advancing towards the carriage: it was ready, and before she could speak again he had handed her in. He had misinterpreted the feeling which kept her face averted and her tongue motionless."

Mr. Knightly's little sermon, in its old-fashioned English, is as applicable now as it was when it was spoken. . . . What a gentleman he is, how true his voice rings, and with what grace and spirit they play their parts—all these people who were modestly put away for so many years!

Mr. Austen died at Bath, and his family removed to Southampton. In 1811, Mrs. Austen, her daughters, and her niece, settled finally at Chawton, a house belonging to Jane's brother, Mr. Knight (he is adopted by an uncle, whose name he takes), and from Chawton all her literary work was given to the world. "Sense and Sensibility," "Pride and Prejudice," were already written; but in the next five years, from thirty-five to forty, she set to work seriously, and wrote "Mansfield Park," "Emma," and "Persuasion." Anyone who has written a book will know what an amount of labour this represents. . . . One can picture to oneself the little family scene which Jane describes to Cassandra. "Pride and Prejudice" just come down in a parcel from town; the unsuspecting Miss B. to dinner; and Jane and her mother setting to in the evening and reading aloud half the first volume of a new novel sent down by the brother. Unsuspecting Miss B. is delighted. Jane complains of her mother's too rapid way of getting on; "though she perfectly understands the characters herself, she cannot speak as they ought. Upon the whole, however," she says, "I am quite vain enough and well-satisfied enough." This is her own criticism of "Pride and Prejudice":—"The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling. It wants shade. It wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn

precious nonsense about something unconnected with the story—an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott or the 'History of Bonaparte.'"

And so Jane Austen lives quietly working at her labour of love, interested in her "own darling children's" success; "the light of the home," one of the real living children says afterwards speaking in the days when he was no longer there. She goes to London once or twice. Once she lives for some months in Hans Place, nursing a brother through an illness. Here it was that she received some little compliments and messages from the Prince Regent, and some valuable suggestions from Mr. Clarke, his librarian, respecting a very remarkable clergyman. He is anxious that she should delineate one who "should pass his time between the metropolis and the country, something like Beatrice's minstrel, entirely engaged in literature, and so man's enemy but his own." Failing to impress his character upon the authoress, he makes a different suggestion, and proposes that she should write a romance illustrative of the august house of Coburg. It would be interesting," he says, "and very properly dedicated to Prince Leopold."

To which Miss Austen replies: "I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not seriously sit down to write a romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be going before the first chapter."

There is a delightful collection of friends' suggestions which she has put together, but which is too

long to be quoted here. She calls it, "Plan of a Novel, as suggested by various Friends."

All this time, while her fame is slowly growing, life passes in the same tranquil way in the old cottage at Chawton. Aunt Jane, with her young face and her mob-cap, makes play-houses for the children, helps them to dress up, invents imaginary conversations for them, supposing that they are all grown up the day after a ball. One can imagine how delightful a game that must have seemed to the little girls. She built her nest, did this good woman, happily weaving it out of shreds, and ends, and scraps of daily duty, patiently put together: and it was from this nest that she sang the song, bright and brilliant, with quaint trills and unexpected cadences, that reaches us even here through fifty years. The lesson her life seems to teach us is this: Don't let us despise our nests—life is as much made of minutes as of years; let us complete the daily duties; let us patiently gather the twigs and the little scraps of moss, and dried grass together; and see the result!—a whole, completed and coherent, beautiful even without the song.

We come too soon to the story of her death. And yet did it come too soon? A sweet life is not the sweeter for being long. Jane Austen lived years enough to fulfil her mission. It was an unconscious one; and unconscious teachers are the highest. They teach by their lives, even more than by their words, and their lives need not reach threescore years and ten to be complete. She lived long enough to write six books that were masterpieces in their way—to make a thousand people the happier for her industry.

One cannot read the story of her latter days with-

out emotion; of her patience, her sweetness, and gratitude. There is family trouble, we are not told of what nature. She falls ill. Her nieces find her in her dressing-gown, like an invalid, in an arm-chair in her bed-room; but she gets up and greets them, and, pointing to seats which had been arranged for them by the fire, says: "There is a chair for the married lady, and a little stool for you, Caroline." But she is too weak to talk, and Cassandra takes them away.

At last they persuade her to go to Winchester, to a well-known doctor there.

"It distressed me," she says, in one of her last, dying letters, "to see Uncle Henry, and William Knight, who kindly attended us, riding in the rain almost the whole way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night, and on Thursday, which is a confirmation and a holiday, we hope to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit from *him*, poor fellow, as he is in the sick room. . . . God bless you, dear E.; if ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. . . ."

Nursing does not cure her, nor can the doctor save her to them all, and she sinks from day to day. To the end she is full of concern for others.

"My dearest sister, my tender watchful indefatigable nurse, has not been made ill by her exertions," she writes. "As to what I owe her, and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it, and pray God to bless them more and more."

One can hardly read this last sentence with dry eyes. It is her parting blessing and farewell to those she had blessed all her life by her presence and her

love. And as we think of others whose lives have been like hers, we thank God that love is beyond death; and its benediction, always with us, not only spoken in words, but by the signs and the love of those lifetimes, that do not end for us as long as we ourselves exist.

They asked her when she was near her end if there was anything she wanted.

"Nothing but death," she said. Those were her last words. She died on July 18, 1817, and was buried in Winchester Cathedral, where she lies not unremembered.

HEROINES AND THEIR GRANDMOTHERS.*

Fantasio. Qui sait? Un calembour console de bien des chagrins, et jouer avec les mots est un moyen comme un autre de jouer avec les pensées, les actions et les êtres. Tout est calembour ici-bas, et il est ainsi difficile de comprendre le regard d'un enfant de quatre ans, que le galimatias de trois drames modernes.

Elisbeth. Tu me fais l'effet de regarder le monde à travers un prisme tant soit peu changeant.

Fantasio. Chacun a ses lunettes, mais personne ne sait au juste de quelle couleur en sont les verres. Qui est-ce qui pourra me dire au juste si je suis heureux ou malheureux, bon ou mauvais, triste ou gai, bête ou spirituel?

WHY do we now-a-days write such melancholy novels? Are authoresses more miserable than they used to be a hundred years ago? Miss Austen's heroines came tripping into the room, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, arch, and good-humoured. Evelina and Cecilia would have thoroughly enjoyed their visits to the opera, and their expeditions to the masquerades, if it had not been for their vulgar relations. Valancourt's Emily was a little upset, to be sure, when she found herself all alone in the ghostly and mouldy castle in the south of France; but she, too, was naturally a lively girl, and on the whole showed a great deal of courage and presence of mind. Miss Edgeworth's heroines were pleasant and easily pleased; and to these may be added a blooming rose-garden of wild Irish girls, and of good-humoured

* *Too Much Alone. City and Suburb. George Geith.*—Mrs. Riddell,
From an Island.

and cheerful young ladies, who consented to make the devoted young hero happy at the end of the third volume, without any very intricate self-examinations; and who certainly were much more appreciated by the heroes of those days, than our modern heroines with all their workings and deep feelings and unrequited affections are now, by the noblemen and gentlemen to whom they happen to be attached.

If one could imagine the ladies of whom we have been speaking coming to life again, and witnessing all the vagaries and agonising experiences and deadly calm and irrepressible emotion of their granddaughters, the heroines of the present day, what a bewildering scene it would be! Evelina and Cecilia ought to faint with horror! Madame Duval's most shocking expressions were never so alarming as the remarks they might now hear on all sides. Elizabeth Bennett would certainly burst out laughing, Emma might lose her temper, and Fanny Price would turn scarlet and stop her little ears. Perhaps Emily of Udolpho, more accustomed than the others to the horrors of sensation, and having once faced those long and terrible passages, might be able to hold her own against such a great-granddaughter as Aurora Floyd or Lady Audley. But how would she deal with the soul-workings and heart-troubles of a modern heroine? Emily would probably prefer any amount of tortuous mysteries, winding staircases and passages, or groans and groans, and yards and yards of faded curtains, to the task of mastering these intricacies of feeling and reality and sentiment.

Are the former heroines women as they were, or as they were supposed to be in those days? Are the women of whom women write now, women as they

are, or women as they are supposed to be? Does our modern taste demand a certain sensation feeling, sensation sentiment, only because it is actually experienced?

This is a question to be answered on some other occasion; but, in the meantime, it would seem as if all the good humours and good spirits of former generations had certainly deserted our own heart-broken ladies. Instead of cheerful endurance, the very worst is made of every passing discomfort. Their laughter is forced, even their happiness is only calm content, for they cannot so readily recover from the two first volumes. They no longer smile and trip through country-dances hand-in-hand with their adorers, but waltz with heavy hearts and dizzy brains, while the hero who scorns them looks on. Open the second volume, you will see that, instead of sitting in the drawing-room or plucking roses in the bower, or looking pretty and pleasant, they are lying on their beds with agonising headaches, walking desperately along the streets they know not whither, or staring out of window in blank despair. It would be curious to ascertain in how great a degree language measures feeling. People, with the help of the penny-post and the telegraph, and the endless means of communication and of coming and going, are certainly able to care for a greater number of persons than they could have done a hundred years ago; perhaps they are also able to care more, and to be more devotedly attached, to those whom they already love; they certainly say more about it, and, perhaps, with its greater abundance and opportunity, expression may have depreciated in value. And this may possibly account for some of the difference between the reserved and measured language

of a Jane Bennett or an Anne Elliot, and the tempestuous confidences of their successors.

Much that is written now is written with a certain exaggeration and an earnestness which was undreamt of in the placid days when, according to Miss Austen, a few assembly balls and morning visits, a due amount of vexation reasonably surmounted, or at most "smiles reined in, and spirits dancing in private rapture," a journey to Bath, an attempt at private theatricals or a thick packet of explanations hurriedly signed with the hero's initials, were the events, the emotions, the aspirations of a lifetime.

They had their accomplishments, these gigot-sleeved ladies: witness Emma's very mild performances in the way of portrait taking; but as for tracking murderers, agonies of mystery, and disappointed affections, flinging themselves at gentlemen's heads, marrying two husbands at once, flashing with irrepressible emotion, or only betraying the deadly conflict going on within by a slight quiver of the pale lip—such ideas never entered their pretty little heads. They fainted a good deal, we must confess, and wrote long and tedious letters to aged clergymen residing in the country. They exclaimed "La!" when anything surprised them, and were, we believe, dreadfully afraid of cows, notwithstanding their country connection. But they were certainly a more amiable race than their successors.

It is a fact that people do not unusually feel the same affection for phenomenons, however curious, that they do for perfectly commonplace human creatures. And yet at the same time we confess that it does seem somewhat ungrateful to complain of these living and

adventurous heroines to whom, with all their vagaries, one has owed such long and happy hours of amusement and entertainment and comfort, and who have gone through so much for our edification.

Analysis of emotion instead of analysis of character, the history of feeling instead of the history of events, seems to be the method of the majority of penwomen. The novels that we have in hand to review now are examples of this mode of treatment; and the truth is, that, except in the case of the highest art and most consummate skill, there is no comparison between the interest excited by facts and general characteristics, as compared with the interest of feeling and emotion told with only the same amount of perception and ability.

Few people, for instance, could read the story of the poor lady who lived too much alone without being touched by the simple earnestness with which her sorrows are written down, although in the bare details of her life there might not be much worth recording. But this is the history of poor Mrs. Storn's feelings more than that of her life—of feelings very sad and earnest and passionate, full of struggle for right, with truth to help and untruth to bewilder her, with power and depth and reality in her struggles, which end at last in a sad sort of twilight that seems to haunt one as one shuts up the book. In "George Geith," of which we will speak more presently, there is the same sadness and minor key ringing all through the composition. Indeed, all this author's tunes are very melancholy—so melancholy that it would seem almost like a defect if they were not at the same time very sweet as well as very sad. *Too Much Alone* is a young woman who

marries a very silent, upright, and industrious chemical experimentalist. He has well-cut features, honourable feelings, a genius for discovering cheap ways of producing acids and chemicals, as well as ideas about cyanosium, which, combined with his perfect trust in and utter neglect of his wife, very nearly brings about the destruction of all their domestic happiness. She is a pale, sentimental young woman, with raven-black hair, clever, and longing for sympathy—a *femme incomprise*, it must be confessed, but certainly much more charming and pleasant and pathetic than such people usually are. Days go by, lonely alike for her, without occupation or friendship or interest; she cannot consort with the dull and vulgar people about her; she has her little son, but he is not a companion. Her husband is absorbed in this work. She has no one to talk to, nothing to do or think of. She lives all alone in the great noisy life-full city, sad and pining, and wistful and weary. Here is a little sketch of her:—

“Lina was sitting, thinking about the fact that she had been married many months more than three years, and that on the especial Sunday morning in question she was just of age. It was still early; for Mr. Storn, according to the fashion of most London folks, borrowed hours from both ends of the day, and his wife was sitting there until it should be time for her to get ready and to go to church alone. Her chair was placed by the open window; and though the city was London, and the locality either the ward of Eastcheap or that of Allhallows, Barking (I am not sure which), fragrant odours came wafted to her senses through the casement; for in this, as in all other things save one, Mr. Storn had considered her nurture and her tastes, and

covered the roof of the counting-house with flowers. But for the distant roll of the carriages, she might just as well have been miles away from London. . . . She was dressed in a pink morning dress, with her dark hair plainly braided upon her pale fair cheek, and she had a staid sober look upon her face, that somehow made her appear handsomer than in the days of old before she married. . . .”

This very Sunday Lina meets a dangerous fascinating man of the world, who is a friendly, well-meaning creature withal, and who can understand and sympathise with her sadness and solitude only too well for her peace of mind, and for his own; again and again she appeals to her husband: “I will find pleasure in the driest employment if you will only let me be with you, and not leave me alone.” She only asks for justice, for confidence—not the confidence of utter desertion and trust and neglect, but the daily confidence and communion, which is a necessity to some women, the permission to share in the common interests and efforts of her husband’s life; to be allowed to sympathise, and to live, and to understand, instead of being left to pine away lonely, unhappy, half asleep, and utterly weary and disappointed. Unfortunately Mr. Storn thinks it is all childish nonsense, and repulses her in the most affectionate manner; poor unhappy Lina behaves as well as ever she can, and devotes herself to her little boy, only her hair grows blacker, and her face turns paler and paler, day by day; she is very good and struggles to be contented, and will not allow herself to think too much of Herbert Clyne; and so things go on the old way for a long, long time; and we turn
; feeling that each one may bring some

terrible catastrophe. At last a crisis comes—troubles thicken—Maurice Storn is always away when he is most wanted; little Geordie, the son, gets hold of some of his father's chemicals, which have cost Lina already so much happiness and confidence, and the poor little boy poisons himself with something sweet out of a little bottle. All the description which follows is very powerfully and pathetically told—Maurice Storn's silence and misery, Lina's desperation and sudden change of feeling. After all her long struggles and efforts she suddenly breaks down, all her courage leaves her, and her desperate longings for right and clinging to truth.

"She said in her soul, 'I have lost the power either to bear or to resist. I have tried to face my misfortune, and I feel I am incapable of doing it . . . why should I struggle or fear any more? I know the worst that life can bring me; I have buried my heart and my hopes with my boy. Why should I strive or struggle any more? And Lina had got to such a pass that she forgot to answer to herself, Because it is right—Right and wrong, she had lost sight of them both.'"

Poor Mrs. Storn is unconscious that already people are beginning to talk of her, first one and then another. Nobody seems very bad. Everybody is going wrong. Maurice abstracted over his work, Lina in a frenzy of wretchedness; home-fires are extinct, outside the cold winds blow, and the snow lies half melted on the ground. The man of the world is waiting in the cold, very miserable too—waiting for Lina, who has almost made up her mind now; their best impulses and chances seem failing them; all about there seems to be only pain, and night, and trouble. But at last,

when the night is blackest, the morning dawns, and Lina is saved.

Everything is then satisfactorily arranged, and Maurice is ruined, and Lina's old affection for him returns. The man of the world is also ruined, and determines to emigrate to some distant colony. Mr. and Mrs. Storn retire to an old-fashioned gabled house at Enfield, where they have no secrets from each other; and it is here that her husband one day tells Lina that he has brought an old friend to say good-bye to her, and then poor Herbert Clyne, the late man of the world, comes across the lawn, and says farewell for ever to both his friends in a very pathetic and touching scene.

Lina Storn is finally disposed of in "Too Much Alone;" but Maurice Storn reappears in disguise, and under various assumed names, in almost all the author's subsequent novels. We are not sorry to meet him over and over again; for although we have never yet been able to realise this stern-cut personage as satisfactorily as we should have liked to do, yet we must confess to a partiality for him, and a respect for his astounding powers of application. Whether he turns his attention to chemistry, to engineering, to figures, to theology, the amount of business he gets through is almost bewildering. At the same time something invariably goes wrong, over which he has no control, notwithstanding all his industry and ability; and he has to acknowledge the weakness of humanity, and the insufficiency of the sternest determination, to order and arrange the events of life to its own will and fancy. To the woman or women depending upon him he is invariably kind, provokingly reserved, and faithfully devoted. He is of

good family and extremely proud, and he is obliged for various reasons to live in the city. All through the stories one seems to hear a suggestive accompanying roll of cart-wheels and carriages. Poor Lina's loneliness seems all the more lonely for the contrast of the busy movement all round about her own silent, sad life. "At first it seemed to give a sort of stimulus to her own existence, hearing the carts roll by, the cabs rattle past, the shout and hum of human voices break on her ear almost before she was awake of a morning. . . . But wear takes the gloss off all things, even off the sensation of being perplexed and amused by the whirl of life."

In "City and Suburb," this din of London life, and the way in which city people live and strive, is capitally described; the heroine is no less a person than a Lady Mayoress, a certain Ruby Ruthven, a beauty, capricious and wayward and impetuous, and she is perhaps one of the best of Mrs. Riddell's creations. For old friendship's sake, we cannot help giving the preference to "Too Much Alone;" but "City and Suburb" is in many respects an advance upon it, and "George Geith" is in its way better than either.

It seems strange as one thinks of it that before these books came out no one except Mr. Dickens had ever thought of writing about city life. There is certainly an interest and a charm about old London, its crowded busy streets, its ancient churches and buildings, and narrow lanes and passages with quaint names, of which we dwellers in the stucco suburbs have no conception. There is the river with its wondrous freight, and the busy docks, where stores of strange goods are lying, that bewilder one as one gazes. Vast

horizons of barrels waiting to be carted, forests of cinnamon-trees and spices, of canes, of ivory, thousands and thousands of great elephant tusks, sorted and stored away, workmen, sailors of every country, a great unknown strange life and bustle. Or if you roam from the busy highway, you find silence, solitude, grass growing between the stones, old courts, iron gateways, ancient squares where the sunshine gathers quietly, a glint of the past, as it were, a feeling of what has been, and what still lingers among the old worn stones and bricks, and traditions of the city. Even the Mansion House, with its kindly old customs and welcome and hospitality, has a charm and romance of its own, that is quite indescribable, from the golden postilion standing behind the Lord Mayor's high chair of state, to the heavy little mutton-pies, which are the same as they were hundreds and hundreds of years ago. All this queer sentiment belonging to old London, the author feels and describes with great cleverness and appreciation.

"George Geith" * is the latest and the most popular of Mrs. Riddell's novels, and it deserves its popularity. It is the history of the man whose name it bears—a man "to work so long as he has a breath left to draw, who would die in his harness rather than give up, who would fight against opposing circumstances whilst he had a drop of blood in his veins, whose greatest virtues are untiring industry and indomitable courage, and who is worth half-a-dozen ordinary men, if only because of his iron frame and unconquerable spirit." Here is a description of the place in which he lived,

* Written in 1865.

on the second floor of the house which stands next but one to the old gateway on the Fenchurch Street side:—

“If quietness was what he wanted, he had it; except in the summer evenings when the children of the Fenchurch Street housekeepers brought their marbles through the passage, and fought over them on the pavement in front of the office-door, there was little noise of life in the old churchyard. The sparrows in the trees or the footfall of someone entering or quitting the court alone disturbed the silence. The roar of Fenchurch Street on the one side, and of Leadenhall Street on the other, sounded in Fen Court but as a distant murmur; and to a man whose life was spent among figures, and who wanted to devote his undivided attention to his work, this silence was a blessing not to be properly estimated save by those who have passed through that maddening ordeal which precedes being able to abstract the mind from external influence. . . . For the historical recollections associated with the locality he had chosen George Geith did not care a rush.”

George Geith lives with his figures, “climbing Alps on Alps of them with silent patience, great mountains of arithmetic with gold lying on their summits for him to grasp;” he works for eighteen hours a day. People come up his stairs to ask for his help—

“Bankrupts, men who were good enough, men who were doubtful, and men who were (speaking commercially) bad, had all alike occasion to seek the accountant’s advice and assistance; retailers, who kept clerks for their sold books, but not for their bought;

sale dealers, who did not want to let their clerks see their books at all; shrewd men of business, who yet could not balance a ledger; ill-educated traders, who, though they could make money, would have been ashamed to show their ill-written and worse-spelled journals to a stranger; unhappy wretches, shivering on the brink of insolvency; creditors, who did not think much of the cooking of some dishonest debtor's accounts;—all these came and sat in George Geith's office, and waited their turn to see him."

And among these comes a country gentleman, a M. Molozane, who is on the brink of ruin, and who has three daughters at home at the Dower House, near Wattisbridge.

There is a secret in George Geith's life and a reason for which he toils; and although early in the story he makes a discovery which relieves him from part of his anxiety and need for money, he still works on from habit, and one day he receives a letter from this M. Molozane, begging him to come to his assistance, and stating that he is ill and cannot come to town. George thinks he would like a breath of country air, and determines to go. The description of Wattisbridge and the road thither is delightful; lambs, cool grass, shaded ponds and cattle, trailing branches, brambles, roses, here a house, there a farm-yard, gently-sloping hills crowned with clumps of trees, distant purple haze, a calm blue sky and fleecy clouds, and close at hand a grassy glade with cathedral branches, a young lady, a black retriever and a white poodle, all of which George Geith notices as he walks along the path, "through the glade, under the shadow

of the arching trees, straight as he can go to meet his destiny."

Beryl Molozane, with the dear sweet kindly brown eyes that seemed to be always laughing and loving, is as charming a destiny as any hero could wish to meet upon a summer's day, as she stands with the sunshine streaming on her nut-brown, red golden hair. She should indeed be capable of converting the most rabid of reviewers to the modern ideal of what a heroine should be, with her April moods and her tenderness and laughter, her frankness, her cleverness, her gay innocent chatter, her outspoken youth and brightness. It is she who manages for the whole household, who works for her father, who protects her younger sister, who schemes and plans, and thinks, and loves for all. No wonder that George loses his heart to her; even in the very beginning we are told, when he first sees her, that he would have

"Taken the sunshine out of his own life to save the clouds from darkening down on hers. He would have left her dear face to smile on still, the guileless heart to throb calmly. He would have left his day without a noon to prevent night from closing over hers. He would have known that it was possible for him to love so well that he should become unselfish"

One cannot help wondering that the author could have had the heart to treat poor pretty Beryl so harshly, when her very creation, the stern and selfish George himself, would have suffered any pain to spare her if it were possible.

It is not our object here to tell a story at length,

which is interesting enough to be read for itself, and touching enough to be remembered long after the last of the three volumes is closed. To be remembered, but so sadly, that one cannot but ask oneself for what reason are such stories written. Are they written to cheer one in dull hours, to soothe, to interest, and to distract from weary thoughts, from which it is at times a blessing to escape? or is it to make one sad with sorrows which never happened, but which are told with so much truth and pathos that they almost seem for a minute as if they were one's own? Is it to fill one's eyes with tears for griefs which might be, but which have not been, and for troubles that are not, except in a fancy, for the sad, sad fate of a sweet and tender woman, who might have been made happy to gladden all who were interested in her story?

A lady putting down this book the other day, suddenly burst into tears, and said, "Why did they give me this to read?" Why, indeed! Beryl might have been more happy, and no one need have been the worse. She and her George might have been made comfortable together for a little while, and we might have learnt to know her all the same. Does sorrow come like this, in wave upon wave, through long sad years, without one gleam of light to play upon the waters? Sunshine *is* sunshine, and warms and vivifies, and brightens, though the clouds are coming too, sooner or later; but in nature no warning voices spoil the happiest hours of our lives by useless threats and terrifying hints of what the future may bring forth. Happiness remembered is happiness always; but where would past happiness be if there was someone always standing by, as in this book, to point with a sigh to

future troubles long before they come, and to sadden and spoil all the pleasant spring-time and all the sport and youth by dreary forebodings of old age, of autumn, and winter snow, and bitter winds that have not yet begun to blow? "So smile the heavens upon that holy act," says the Friar, "that after sorrow chide us not." "Amen, amen," says Romeo; "but come what sorrow can, it cannot countervail the exchange of joy that one short minute gives me in her sight." And we wish that George Geith had been more of Romeo's way of thinking.

A tragic ending is very touching at the time, and moves many a sympathy; but who ever reads a melancholy story over and over and over as some stories are read? My father used to say that a bad ending to a book was a great mistake; that he never would make one of his own finish badly. What was the use of it? Nobody ever cared to read a book a second time when it ended unhappily.

There is a great excuse in the case of the writer of "George Geith," who possesses in no common degree the powers of pathos. Take for instance the parting between George and Beryl. She says that it is no use talking about what is past and gone; that they must part, and he knows it.

"Then for a moment George misunderstood her. The agony of her own heart, the intense bitterness of the draught she was called upon to drink, the awful hopelessness of her case, and the terrible longing she felt to be permitted to live and love once more, sharpened her voice and gave it a tone she never intended.

“‘Have you grown to doubt me?’ he asked. ‘Do you not know I would marry you to-morrow if I could? Do you think that throughout all the years to come, be they many or be they few, I could change to you? Oh, Beryl! do you not believe that through time and through eternity I shall love you and none other?’

“‘I do not doubt; I believe,’ and her tears fall faster and her sobs become more uncontrollable....

“What was she to him at that moment? More than wife; more than all the earth; more than heaven; more than life. She was something more, far more, than any poor words we know can express. What he felt for her was beyond love; the future he saw stretching away for himself without her, without a hope of her, was in its blank weariness so terrible as to be beyond despair. Had the soul been taken out of his body, life could not have been more valueless. Take away the belief of immortality, and what has mortality left to live for?

“At the moment George Geith knew, in a stupid, dull kind of way, that to him Beryl had been an earthly immortality; that to have her again for his own had been the one hope of his weary life, which had made the days and the hours endurable unto him.

“Oh! woe for the great waste of love which there is in this world below; to think how it is filling some hearts to bursting, whilst others are starving for the lack thereof; to think how those who may never be man and wife, those who are about to be parted by death, those whose love can never be anything but a sorrow and trial, merge their own identity in that of

one another, whilst the lawful heads of respectable households wrangle and quarrel, and honest widows order their mourning with decorous resignation, and disconsolate husbands look out for second wives!

"Why is it that the ewe-lamb is always that selected for sacrifice? Why is it that the creature upon which man sets his heart shall be the one snatched from him? Why is it that the thing we prize perishes? That as the flower fades and the grass withereth, so the object of man's love, the delight of his eyes and the desire of his soul, passeth away to leave him desolate?

"On George Geith the blow fell with such force that he groped darkly about, trying to grasp his trouble; trying to meet some tangible foe with whom to grapple. Life without Beryl; days without sun; winter without a hope of summer; nights that could never know a dawn. My reader, have patience, have patience with the despairing grief of this strong man, who had at length met with a sorrow that crushed him.

"Have patience whilst I try to tell of the end that came to his business and to his pleasure; to the years he had spent in toil; to the hours in which he had tasted enjoyment! To the struggles there had come success; to the hopes fruition; but with success and with fruition there had come likewise death.

"Everything for him was ended in existence. Living, he was as one dead. Wealth could not console him; success could not comfort him; for him, for this hard, fierce worker, for the man who had so longed for rest, for physical repose, for domestic pleasures, the flowers were to have no more perfume, home no more happiness; the earth no more loveliness. The

first spring blossoms, the summer glory on the trees and fields, the fruits and flowers, and thousand tinted leaves of autumn, and the snows and frosts of winter, were never to touch his heart, nor stir his senses in the future.

"Never the home he pictured might be his, never, ah, never! He had built his dream-house on the sands, and, behold, the winds blew and the waves beat, and he saw it all disappear, leaving nought but dust and ashes, but death and despair! Madly he fought with his sorrow, as though it were a living thing that he could grasp and conquer; he turned on it constantly, and strove to trample it down."

No comment is needed to point out the power and pathos of this long extract. The early story of George Geith is in many respects the same as the story of Warrington in "Pendennis," but the end is far more sad and disastrous, and, as it has been shown, pretty bright Beryl dies of her cruel tortures, and it is, in truth, difficult to forgive the author for putting her through so much unnecessary pain and misery.

One peculiarity which strikes us in all these books is, that the feelings are stronger and more vividly alive than the people who are made to experience them. Even Beryl herself is more like a sweet and tender idea of a woman than a living woman with substance and stuff, and bone and flesh, though her passion and devotion are all before us as we read, and seem so alive and so true that they touch us and master us by their intensity and vividness.

The sympathy between the writer and the reader of a book is a very subtle and strange one, and there

is something curious in the necessity for expression on both sides: the writer pouring out the experience and feelings of years, and the reader, relieved and strengthened in certain moods to find that others have experienced and can speak of certain feelings, have passed through phases with which he himself is acquainted. The imaginary Public is a most sympathising friend; he will listen to the author's sad story; he does not interrupt or rebuff him, or weary with impatient platitudes, until he has had his say and uttered all that was within him. The author perhaps writes on good and ill, successes, hopes, disappointments, or happier memories, of unexpected reprieves, of unhoped-for good fortunes, of old friendships, long-tried love, faithful sympathies enduring to the end. All this, not in the words and descriptions of the events which really happened, but in a language of which he or she alone holds the key, or of which, perhaps, the full significance is scarcely known even to the writer. Only in the great unknown world which he addresses there surely is the kindred spirit somewhere, the kind heart, the friend of friends who will understand him. Novel-writing must be like tears to some women, the vent and the relief of many a chafing spirit. People say, Why are so many novels written? and the answer is, Because there are so many people feeling, thinking, and enduring, and longing to give voice and expression to the silence of the life in the midst of which they are struggling. The necessity for expression is a great law of nature, one for which there is surely some good and wise reason, as there must be for that natural desire for sympathy which is common to so many. There seems to be something wrong and incomplete

in those natures which do not need it, something inhuman in those who are incapable of understanding the mystical and tender bond by which all humanity is joined and bound together. A bond of common pain and pleasure, of common fear and hope, and love, and weakness.

Poets tell us that not only human creatures, but the whole universe, is thrilling with sympathy and expression, entreating, uttering, in plaints or praise, or in a wonder of love and admiration. What do the sounds of a bright spring day mean? Cocks crow in the farmyards and valleys below; high up in the clear heavens the lark is pouring out its sweet passionate thrills; shriller and sweeter, and more complete as the tiny speck soars higher and higher still, "flow the profuse strains of unpremeditated art." The sheep baa and browse, and shake their meek heads; children shout for the very pleasure of making a sound in the sunshine. Nature is bursting with new green, brightening, changing into a thousand lovely shades. Seas washing and sparkling against the shores, streaks of faint light gleam in distant horizons, soft winds are blowing about the landscape; what is all this but an appeal for sympathy, a great natural expression of emotion?

And perhaps, after all, the real secret of our complaint against modern heroines is not so much that they are natural and speak out what is in them, and tell us of deeper and more passionate feeling than ever stirred the even tenour of their grandmothers' narratives, but that they are morbid, constantly occupied with themselves, one-sided, and ungrateful for the wonders and blessings of a world which is not less beautiful now than it was a hundred years ago, where

perhaps there is a less amount of pain than at the time when Miss Austen and Miss Ferrier said their say.

Jane Austen's own story was more sad and more pathetic than that of many and many of the heroines whom we have been passing in review and complaining of, and who complain to us so loudly; but in her, knowledge of good and evil, and of sorrow and anxiety and disappointment, evinced itself, not in impotent railings against the world and impatient paragraphs and monotonous complaints, but in a delicate sympathy with the smallest events of life, a charming appreciation of its common aspects, a playful wisdom and kindly humour, which charm us to this day.

Many of the heroines of to-day are dear and tried old friends, and would be sorely missed out of our lives, and leave irreparable blanks on our bookshelves; numbers of them are married and happily settled down in various country-houses and parsonages in England and Wales; but for the sake of their children who are growing up round about them, and who will be the heroes and heroines of the next generation or two, we would appeal to their own sense of what is right and judicious, and ask them if they would not desire to see their daughters brought up in a simpler, less spasmodic, less introspective state of mind than they themselves have been? Are they not sometimes haunted by the consciousness that their own experiences may have suggested a strained and affected view of life to some of their younger readers, instead of encouraging them to cheerfulness, to content, to a moderate estimate of their own infallibility, a *charity* for others, and a not too absorbing contemplation

nselves, their own virtues and shortcomings? "Avant
, le temps est *poseur*," says George Sand, "et toi
fais la guerre à ce travers, tu en es pénétré de la
aux pieds."

SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.

WHEN he was a very little boy, Edwin Landseer used to ask his mother to set him a copy to draw from, and then—so his sisters have told me—complain that she always drew one of two things, either a shoe or a currant pudding, of both of which he was quite tired. No wonder that this was insufficient food for the eager young spirit for whose genius in after life two kingdoms were not too wide a range. The boy, when he was a little older, and when his bent seemed more clearly determined, went to his father and asked him for teaching. The father was a wise man, and told his son that he could not himself teach him to be a painter, that Nature was the only school, Observation the true and only teacher. He told little Edwin to use his own powers; to think about all the things he saw; to copy everything: and then he turned the boy out with his brothers—they were all three much of an age—to draw the world as it then existed upon Hampstead Heath. There seem to have been then, as now, little donkeys upon the common, old horses grazing the turf and gorse, and children and chickens at play, though I fear that now, alas! no curly-headed boy is there storing up treasures for the use of a whole generation to come.

Day after day the children used to spend upon the Heath in the fresh air, at their sports and their flights, but learning meanwhile their early lesson. Their elder sister used to go with them, a young mentor to keep these frolicsome spirits within bounds. One can imagine the little party, buoyant, active, in the full delightful spring of early youth. Perhaps youth is a special attribute belonging to artistic natures, to those whom the gods have favoured, and the old fanciful mythology is not all a fable. When I last saw Sir Edwin Landseer, something of this indescribable youthful brightness still seemed to be with him, although the cloud which dimmed his later years had already partially fallen. But the cruel cloud is more than half a century distant at the time of which I am writing, and, thanks be to Heaven, the whole flood of life, and work, and achievement lies between.

Young Edwin painted a picture in these very early days, which was afterwards sold. It was called the "Mischief-makers:" a mischievous boy had tied a log of wood to the tail of a mischievous donkey. The ass's head in the South Kensington Museum may have been drawn upon Hampstead Heath—a careful black-lead donkey, that cropped the turf and looked up one day, some sixty years ago, with a puzzled face. Perhaps it was wondering at the size of the artist standing opposite, with his little sympathetic hand at work. The drawing is marked "E. Landseer, five years old." This little donkey, of the line of Balaam's ass, had already found out the secret and knew how to speak in his own language to the youthful prophet. Our prophet needs no warning on his journey; he is not about to barter his sacred gift, and from Hampstead Heath, and

from many a wider moor, he will honestly give his blessing to the tribes as they come up in turn. The tribe of the poor; the tribe of the hard-working rich; the tribe of Manchester; the tribe of Belgravia. There are other sketches in the frame at the Kensington Museum; a policeman pointed them out to me. "*He* knew Sir Edwin's pictures well, and his sketches, too; why, he was only six years old when he drew that dog," said the policeman, kindly. The dog is a pointer curling its tail; there is the household cat, too, with broad face and feline eyes. There is a more elaborate sketch done at the age of fifteen, and probably representing the same pointer grown into an ancient model now, and promoted from black-lead to water-colour. The painter himself must have been starting in life by this time: born with his fairy gift, the time was come to reveal it.

Little Edwin was eight years old when he first engraved a plate of etchings; asses' heads, sheep, donkeys all were there, and then came a second plate for lions and tigers. He was always drawing animals. When he was thirteen he exhibited the portrait of a pointer and puppy, and also the portrait of Mr. Simpson's mule, by "Master E. Landseer," as mentioned in the catalogue. In this year his father took him to Haydon, the painter. There is a notice in Haydon's "Diary":—

"In 1815 Mr. Landseer, the engraver, had brought me his sons, and said: 'When do you intend to let your beard grow and take pupils?' I said, 'If my instructions are useful or valuable, now.' 'Will you let my boys come?' I said, 'Certainly.' Charles and Thomas, it was immediately arranged, should come

every Monday morning, when I was to give them work for the week. Edwin took my dissections of the lion, and I advised him to dissect animals as the only mode of acquiring a knowledge of their construction.

"This very incident generated in me the desire to form a school, and as the Landseers made rapid progress, I resolved to communicate my system to others."

In 1817 Landseer exhibited a picture of "Brutus," the family friend. After "Brutus" comes a picture called "Fighting Dogs getting Wind," which was his first real success. It was, I believe, bought by that friendly umpire of art, Sir George Beaumont. In 1818 Wilkie writes approvingly to Haydon, saying: "Geddes has a good head, Etty a clever piece, and young Landseer's jack-asses are also good." Most of these facts I have read in a helpful little biography in the South Kensington Museum, which contains a list of Sir Edwin's early works. The list is a marvel of length and industry. There are many etchings mentioned, and among them "Recollections of Sir Walter and Lady Scott." When Sir Edwin gave up etching, it was Thomas Landseer who engraved his pictures. And here I cannot help adding that, looking over the etchings of that early time, and of later date, my admiration has not been alone for Sir Edwin, but for his brother's work as well.

Haydon's advice about depicting lions seems to have stood the young student in good stead. There is mention made of roaring and prowling lions, of a lion disturbed at his meal, on a canvas six feet by eight. Haydon, as we know, was for extremes of canvas and other things. Leslie, in his autobiography, has his ap-

preciative word for Haydon: "I was captivated with Haydon's art," he writes, "which was then certainly at its best, and tried, but with no success, to imitate the richness of his colour and impasto. . . . At a much later period I was struck with his resemblance to Charles Lamb's 'Ralph Bigod, Esq.,' that noble type of the great race of men—"the men who borrow." I even thought, before Lamb declared Fenwick to be the prototype of Bigod, that Haydon was the man, and I am not sure that Lamb did not think of him as well as of Fenwick. All the traits were Haydon's. Bigod had an *undeniable* way with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick, jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey, *canà fides*. He anticipated no excuse, and found none. When I think of this man—his fiery glow of heart, his swell of feeling—how magnificent, how *ideal* he was, how great at the midnight hour, and when I compare him with the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I have fallen into the society of *lenders* and *little* men."

In 1822 Landseer received a premium from the British Institution for a picture called "The Larder Invaded." In 1842 he paints the celebrated "Catspaw: the monkey's device for eating hot chestnuts." It was sold for 100*l.*, and would fetch near 3,000*l.* now. Then he is made A.R.A.; and in 1826 the scene changes from lions' dens and monkeys' pranks to the well-loved moors and lakes—to the misty, fresh, silent life of the mountain that he has brought into all our homes.

Some of his earliest paintings are illustrations out of Walter Scott's romances. He loved Scott from the

beginning to the very end of his life, and kept some of his books and some of Shakespeare's plays by his bed-side, to read when he could not sleep. One of his very first oil pictures, however, was not out of a book: it was the portrait of his sister as a little baby girl, toddling about in a big bonnet.

There is a pretty little paragraph in Leslie's autobiography, about Landseer after he became a student at the Royal Academy. "Edwin Landseer," he says, "who entered the Academy very early, was a pretty little curly-headed boy, and he attracted Fuseli's attention by his talents and gentle manners. Fuseli would look round for him and say, 'Where is my little *dog-boy*?'"

The few words tell their story, and at the same time reveal the kind heart of the writer, who all his life seems to have admired and loved his younger companion, of whom there is frequent mention in his books. "Art may be learnt, but can't be taught," says Leslie, as the elder Landseer had said. "Under Fuseli's wise neglect Wilkie, Mulready, Etty, Landseer, and Haydon distinguished themselves, and were the better for not being made all alike by teaching, if indeed that could have been done."

Fuseli's system seems to have been to come in with a book in his hand and to sit reading nearly the whole time he remained with the students; and here I cannot help saying that Leslie himself followed a very different method. It is true that when he taught young painters he used to say very little, but "he would take the brushes and pallet himself and show them a great deal," says his son George.

It is now about fifty years since the little *dog-boy*

(who was only some nineteen years old) set up in life for himself, hired a tiny cottage with a studio in St. John's Wood. The district even now is silent and unenclosed in many places. In those days it must have been almost a country place. A garden paling divided the painter and his young household from friendly neighbours; and Mrs. Mackenzie, his sister and house-keeper in those youthful days, has told us of pleasant early times and neighbourly meetings; while the young man works and toils at his art, and faces the early difficulties and anxieties that oppress him, and that even his fairy gift cannot altogether avert.

In one of the notices upon his pictures it is said that as a boy and a youth he haunted shows of wild beasts with his sketch-book, and the matches of rat-killing by terriers. Cannot one picture the scene, the cruel sport; the crowd looking on, stupid or vulgarly excited, and there, among coarse and heavy glances and dull scowling looks, shines the bright young face, not seeing the things that the dull eyes are watching, but discerning the something beyond—the world within the world—that life within common life that genius makes clear to us?

What are the old legends worth if this is not what they mean? Our Sir Orpheus plays, and men and animals are brought into his charmed circle. Qualities delicate, indescribable, sympathies between nature and human nature are revealed.

A description in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Transformation* of Donatello and the animals recalls Edwin Landseer as one reads it.

There is a world to which some favoured spirits belong by natural right; others, who are more distant

from its simple inspiration, want the interpreter who is to tell them the meaning of those sudden brown lights and wistful glances; those pricking ears and tails aquiver; those black confiding noses, humorous and simple, snuffing and sniffing the heathery breezes. It is he who has summoned those little feet for us, coming, as in Donatello's charm, suddenly scampering down the mountain pass; we seem to hear the gentle flurry; or again, we are on the mountain itself; the figures lie motionless wrapped in their plaids, the stag is unconscious and quietly grazing, in branching dignity; it is the little doe, watchful, with sweet, up-pricked head, who is turning to give the alarm; or again it may be a tranquil mist through which the light forms are passing; or a stag wounded and trailing across the sunset waters to die.

Who does not know the picture called "Suspense": the noble hound watching at his master's closed door? The painter has painted a whole heart, tender reproach, silence, steady trust, anxious patience. The theme is utterly pathetic, and tells its story straight to the bystander; the door is closed fast and will never open; the frayed feather from the master's plume has fallen to the ground. He must have been carried by, for there is a drop of blood upon the feather and another on the floor beyond, and the helpless tender friend has been shut out. I can hardly imagine any picture more tranquil, more pathetic. Who that has ever been shut out but will understand the pang?

And then, again, what home-like glimpses do we owe to Landseer? Has he not painted warmth, content, and fidelity for us? Look at that fireside party; the ~~der~~ contentment of the colley, whose faithful nose

is guarding the old shepherd's slippers; or the Highland breakfast scene, with its gentle, almost maternal, humours; the baby, the proud mother, the little fat puppies that are a pleasure to behold. In the well-known painting of the "Shepherd's Last Mourner," the pathos consists as much in that which is not as in that which is there. The dog with silent care rests his head upon the lonely coffin. He does not understand very much about it all: life he can understand, not death. His feeling is more touching in its incompleteness than if he could grasp anything beyond the present strange wistful moment. Is there aspiration in such a picture? There is natural religion most certainly, as there must be in all true nature. No saint depicted in agony, no painted miracle, could give a more vivid realisation of simple natural feeling, of the mysterious love and fidelity which is in life, and which the very dog can understand, as he silently watches by his old master's coffin.

As I write a friend is saying that some people complain, and not without justice, that Landseer in some instances makes his animals almost too human. The picture of Uncle Tom and his wife in chains has been instanced. In the "Triumph of Comus" the blending of animal and human nature is most painful to look at, and it is a relief to turn from its nightmare-like vividness to those peaceful cliffs hanging on the wall beyond, where the fresh daylight comes over the crisp waters, where the children are at play and the sheep grazing at the cannon mouth.

One can recognise in some of the earlier paintings of Sir Edwin the impression of the mental companionship of those who influenced the school of art at the

beginning of this century. Regarding this, the school of Wilkie, of Mulready, I can only turn once more to Leslie's temperate criticisms. "Every great painter," he says, "carries us into a world of his own, where, if we give ourselves up to his guidance, we shall find much enjoyment; but if we cavil at every step, we may be sure there is a greater fault in ourselves than any we can discover in him."

We do not lower our individuality because we submit for a time and learn to see life from different points of view.

The school which preceded Edwin Landseer was a placid and practical school, looking for harmonies rather than for contrasts, somewhat wanting in emotion and vividness of feeling. The meteor-like Turner blazed across the path of these quiet students without inspiring them with his own dazzling and breathless grasp of time and light. Leslie, writing of art, looks back wistfully to the times of Stothart, Fuseli, of Wilkie, Lawrence, Etty, and Constable; but, with all their harmony of colour and merits of natural expression, they do not strike the chords that Sir Edwin has struck in his highest moments of inspiration. This much one cannot deny that his pictures are unequal, sometimes over-crowded, sometimes wanting in tone and colour; there are subjects too which seem scarce worthy of his consummate pencil. His very popularity is a hard test, and the constant reproduction of his pictures on every wall must needs blunt their fresh interest. But this is hypercriticism. How many blank front parlours, how many long dull passages and tiresome half hours of life has he changed and illuminated. Remembering some of these half hours, one could almost wish that none

but pleasant associations might belong to those familiar apparitions of playful paws and trustful noses. A pretty little page returning from the chase was the playfellow of our own early life; the sun fell on his innocent head as he hung on the wall of our high-perched Paris home. Here, by a foggier fireside, the children grow up companionably with the dear big dog that is saving the little child from the sea. It was the beneficent painter himself who sent this big dog to live with us with a friendly cypher in a corner of the frame.

A friend has told us the story of another dog bestowed by the same kind hand: "About ten years ago Sir Edwin wished me to keep a dog, thinking that when I came home I should not be so lonely; he also said that he would look for one for me himself. I told him that my business occupations would not allow me to give a dog proper attention, and although Sir Edwin mentioned the subject more than once I still refused. About a month afterwards he came to dine with me one day, and when he arrived brought a beautifully finished picture of a dog, saying, 'Here H., I have brought you a parlour boarder; I hope you won't turn him out of doors.'"

A writer in the "Daily News," in a charmingly written notice, describes Sir Edwin's manner of working:—

"His method of composition was remarkably like Scott's, except in the point of the early rising of the latter. Landseer went late to bed and rose very late—coming down to breakfast at noon; but he had been composing perhaps for hours." Scott declared that the most fertile moments for resources, in invention especi-

ally, were those between sleeping and waking, or rather before opening the eyes from sleep, while the brain was wide awake. This, much prolonged, was Landseer's time for composing his pictures. His conception once complete, nothing could exceed the rapidity of his execution. In his best days, before his sense of failing eyesight and the rivalry of rising pre-Raphaelite art aggravated his painful fastidiousness, his rapidity was quite as marvellous as Scott's. The speed was owing to decision, and the decision was owing to the thorough elaboration of the subject in his mind before he committed it to the management of his masterly hand." The stories are numberless of the rapidity with which he executed his work. There are two little King Charles' in the South Kensington Museum, wonders of completeness and consummate painting, whose skins are silk, whose eyes gleam with light. They are said to have been painted in two days. I have read somewhere also the melancholy fact in addition that both the poor little creatures died by violent deaths.

The "Daily News" quotes a rabbit picture exhibited in the British Gallery under which Sir Edwin wrote, "painted in three-quarters of an hour."

The first time I was ever in Sir Edwin's studio was about twelve years ago, when we drove there one summer's day with my father to see a picture of the "Highland Flood" just then completed. We came away talking of the picture, touched by the charm and the kindness of the master of the house, laden with the violets from the garden, which he had given us. Another time the master was no longer there, but his house still opened hospitably with a greeting for old days' sake from those who had belonged to him and who

had known my father. We were let in at the side gate. There stood the great white house that we remembered; we crossed the garden, where the dead leaves were still heaped, and some mist was hanging among the bare branches of the trees, and so by an entrance lined with pictures we came into the great studio once more, where all the memories and pictures were crowded, hanging to the walls, piled against the easels. We seemed to be walking into the shrine of a long life, and one almost felt ashamed, and as if one were surprising its secrets. All about the walls and on the ceiling were time stains spreading in a dim veil; he used to say that he hated whitewash, and that he would never allow any workman but himself about the place. It seemed to me at first as if the cloud of his later days still hung about the room, where he had suffered so many cruel hours; but, looking again, there were his many bright and sweet fancies meeting us on every side, and the gloom suddenly dispelled. Everywhere are beautiful and charming things, that strike one as one looks. Perhaps it is a tender little calf's head tied by its nose, perhaps a flock of sheep against a soft grey sky. There are old companions over the chimney, Sir Roderick and David Roberts looking out of a gloom of paint; there is a lion roaring among the rocks that seems to fill the room with its din.

As we look round we see more pictures and sketches of every description. There is a little princess, in green velvet, feeding a great Newfoundland dog; there is the picture of the young man dying in some calm distant place, with a little quivering living dog upon his knee looking up into his face; near to this stands a lovely little sketch about which Miss Landseer

told us a little story. One day the painter was at work when they came hurriedly to tell him that the Queen was riding up to his garden-gate, and wished him to come out to her. He was to see her mounted upon her horse for a picture he was to paint. It seemed to me like some fanciful little story out of a fairy tale, or some old-world legend. The young painter at his art; the young queen cantering up, followed by her court, and passing on, and the sketch remaining to tell the story. He has painted in the old archway at Windsor Castle; the light and queenly figure is drifting from beneath it, other people are following, the sun is shining. Many of these sketches are hasty, but there is not one that does not bear traces of the master's hand.

We all know Sir Joshua's often-quoted answer to Lord Holland, when he asked him how long he had been painting his picture.

"All my life," is written in many a picture, as it is written indeed in many a face. Take the likeness of Gibson, with his keen downcast head, simple, manly, and refined. Is not his whole life written there? With the *thrill* of this noble portrait rises a vision within a vision of another studio miles and years away. The click of the workman's hammer comes echoing through Roman sunshine—the marble dust is lying in a heap at our feet—there stands the sculptor in his working dress, pointing to the band of colour in the Venus waving hair.

There is another portrait in the room, to which the painter has given all his best and noblest work. He has opened his magic box—Pandora's was nothing to it—and there stands a lady with a child in her arms,

endowed with a gentle might of grace, of womanly instinct and beauty. The baby's little foot is caught in the lacework of the shawl; the mother's face is turned aside. It is a charming group, refined, full of sentiment. But for all women Edwin Landseer had this courteous feeling of manly deference. There is a Highland mother sitting with a little Highland baby in her arms among limpid grays and browns; there is a lovely marchioness with a dear little chubby innocent-eyed baby upon her knee. It is all the same feeling, the same grace and tenderness of expression.

Ruskin describes somewhere the attitude of mind in which a true artist should set to work. Sham art concocts its effect bit by bit; it puts in a light here, a shade there; piles on beauties, rubs in sentiment. The true painter will receive the impression straight from the subject, and then, keeping to that precious impression, works upon it with all his skill and power of attention. Anybody can understand the difference. Even great artists like Landseer sometimes paint pictures out of tune with their own natures, where the painter's skill is evident, and his industry, but his heart is not.

But here is his heart in many a delightful sketch and completed work: in the "loveable dogs' heads," that my companion liked so much, with eyes flashing and melting from the canvas; in the pointer's creeping along the ground; in the sportsmanlike eagerness and stir of the "otter-hunt;" in the tender uplifted paw of the little dog talking to Godiva's horse; in many a sketch and completed picture.

When Landseer first became intimate with Mr. Jacob Bell, he was not a rich man, nor had he ever

been able to save any money, but under his excellent and experienced good advice and management, the painter's affairs became more flourishing. When Mr. Bell died, his partner devoted himself, as he had done, to Sir Edwin's interests. The little old cottage had been added to and enlarged meanwhile, the great studio was built, the park was enclosed, the pictures and prints multiplied and spread, the painter's popularity grew.

One wonderful—never to be forgotten—night my father took us to see some great ladies in their dresses going to the Queen's fancy ball. We drove to —— House (it is all very vague and dazzlingly indistinct in my mind). We were shown into a great empty room, and almost immediately some doors were flung open, there came a blaze of light, a burst of laughing voices, and from many a twinkling dinner-table rose a 'company that seemed, to our unaccustomed eyes, as if all the pictures in Hampton Court had come to life. The chairs scraped back, the ladies and gentlemen advanced together over the shining floors. I can remember their high heels clicking on the floor: they were in the dress of the court of King Charles II.; the ladies, beautiful, dignified, and excited. There was one, lovely and animated, in yellow; I remember her pearls shining. Another seemed to us even more beautiful, as she crossed the room all dressed in black—but she, I think, was not going to the ball; and then somebody began to say, "Sir Edwin has promised to rouge them," and then everybody began to call out for him, and there was also an outcry about his

moustaches that "*really* must be shaved off," for they were not in keeping with his dress. Then, as in a dream, we went off to some other great house, Bath House perhaps, where one lady, more magnificently dressed than all the others, was sitting in a wax-lighted dressing-room, in a sumptuous sort of conscious splendour, and just behind her chair stood a smiling gentleman, also in court dress, and he held up something in one hand and laughed, and said he must go back to the house from whence we came, and the lady thanked him and called him Sir Edwin. We could not understand who this Sir Edwin was, who seemed to be wherever we went. Nor why he should put on the rouge. Then the majestic lady showed us her beautiful jewelled shoe. Then a fairy thundering chariot carried off this splendid lady, and the nose-gays of the hanging footmen seemed to scent the air as the equipage drove off under the covered way. Perhaps all this is only a dream, but I think it is true: for there was again a third house where we found more pictures alive, two beautiful young pictures and their mother, for whom a parcel was brought in post-haste, containing a jewel all dropping with pearls. Events seem so vivid when people are nameless, are only faces not lives, when all life is an impression. That evening was always the nearest approach to a live fairy tale that we ever lived, and that ball more brilliant than any we ever beheld.

No wonder Edwin Landseer liked the society of these good-natured and splendid people, and no wonder they liked his. To be a delightful companion is in itself no small gift. Edwin Landseer's company was a wonder of charming gaiety. I have heard my

father speak of it with the pride he used to take in the gifts of others.

I see a note about nothing at all lying on the table, which a friend has sent among some others of sadder import; but it seems to give a picture of a day's work, written as it is with "the palette in the other hand," at the time of Sir Edwin's health of labour and popularity.

"I shall like to be scolded by you," he writes. "This eve I dine with Lord Hardinge, and have to go to Lord Landesborough's after the banquet, and then to come back here to R. A. Leslie, who has a family hop—which I am afraid will entirely fill up my time, otherwise I should have been delighted to say yes. Pray give me another opportunity.

"Written, with my palette in the other hand, in honest hurry."

Perhaps Edwin Landseer was the first among modern painters who restored the old traditions of a certain sumptuous habit of living and association with great persons. The charm of manner of which kind Leslie spoke, put him at ease in a world where charm of manner is not without its influence, and where his brilliant gifts and high-minded scrupulous spirit made him deservedly loved, trusted, and popular. To artistic natures especially, there is something almost irresistible in the attraction of beauty and calm leisure and refinement. These things seem to say more perhaps than they are really worth in themselves.

Lords and ladies have to thank the intelligent classes for many of the things that make their homes delightful and complete; for the noble pictures on

their walls, the books that speak to them, the arts that move them; and, perhaps, the intelligent classes might in their turn learn to adorn their own homes with something of the living art which belongs to many of these well-bred people, who sometimes win the best-loved of the workers away from their companions and make them welcome. No wonder that men not otherwise absorbed by home ties are delighted and charmed by a sense of artistic fitness and tranquillity, which after all might be more widely spread, and which is no mysterious secret only taught by prosperity, it is the gentleness of goodwill and the self-respecting deference of generous interest in others.

A friend has sent me the following pages, which describe Sir Edwin at this time, and I cannot do better than give them here as they have come to me.

"The world knows nothing of its 'greatest men,' was not applicable to Landseer. Though not one of its greatest men, he was a man of acknowledged genius, and was courted, admired, made much of, by all who knew him. 'Landseer will be with us,' was held out as an inducement to join many a social board, where his wit, gaiety, and peculiar powers of mimicry rendered him a delightful guest. But I am speaking of him as he appeared before the fine spirit was darkened by one of the heaviest of calamities!

"Landseer's perceptions of character were remarkably acute. Not only did he know what was passing in the hearts of dogs, but he could read pretty closely into those of men and women also. The love of truth was an instinct with him; his common phrase about those he estimated highly was that 'they ~~he~~'

•

the true ring.' This was most applicable to himself; there was no alloy in *his* metal; he was true to himself and to others. This was proved in many passages of his life, when nearly submerged by those disappointments and troubles which are more especially felt by sensitive organisations such as that which it was his fortune—or misfortune to possess. It was a pity that Landseer, who might have done so much for the good of animal-kind, never wrote on the subject of their treatment. He had a strong feeling against the way some dogs are tied up, only allowed their freedom now and then. He used to say a man would fare better tied up than a dog, because the former can take his coat off, but a dog lives in his for ever. He declared a tied-up dog, without daily exercise, goes mad, or dies, in three years. His wonderful power over dogs is well known. An illustrious lady asked him how it was that he gained this knowledge? 'By peeping into their hearts, ma'am,' was his answer. I remember once being wonderfully struck with the mesmeric attraction he possessed with them. A large party of his friends were with him at his house in St. John's Wood; his servant opened the door; three or four dogs rushed in, one a very fierce-looking mastiff. We ladies recoiled, but there was no fear; the creature bounded up to Landseer, treated him like an old friend, with most expansive demonstrations of delight. Someone remarking, 'how fond the dog seemed of him,' he said, 'I never saw it before in my life.'

"Would that horse-trainers could have learnt from him how horses could be broken in or trained more easily by kindness than by cruelty. Once when visit-

ing him he came in from his meadow looking somewhat dishevelled and tired, 'What have you been doing?' we asked him. 'Only teaching some horses tricks for Astley's, and here is *my* whip,' he said, showing us a piece of sugar in his hand. He said that breaking-in horses meant more often breaking their hearts, and robbing them of all their spirit.

"Innumerable are the instances, if I had the space, I could give you of his kind and wise laws respecting the treatment of the animal world, and it is a pity they are not preserved for the large portion of the world who love, and wish to ameliorate, the condition of their 'poor relations.'

"There were few studios formerly more charming to visit than Landseer's. Besides the genial artist and his beautiful pictures, the *habitués* of his workshop (as he called it) belonged to the *élite* of London society, especially the men of wit and distinguished talents—none more often there than D'Orsay, with his good-humoured face, his ready wit, and delicate flattery. 'Landseer,' he would call out at his entrance, 'keep the dogs off me' (the painted ones), 'I want to come in, and some of them will bite me—and that fellow in de corner is growling furiously.' Another day he seriously asked me for a pin, and when I presented it to him and wished to know why he wanted it, he replied, 'to take de thorn out of dat dog's foot; do you not see what pain he is in?' I never look at the picture now without this other picture rising before me. Then there was Mulready, still looking upon Landseer as the young student, and fearing that all this incense would spoil him for future

work; and Fonblanque, who maintained from first to last that he was on the top rung of the ladder, and when at the exhibition of some of Landseer's later works, he heard it said, 'They were not equal to his former ones,' he exclaimed in his own happy manner, 'It is hard upon Landseer to flog him with his own laurels.'

"But, dear A——, I am exceeding the limits of a letter; you asked me to write some of my impressions about Landseer, and I am sure you and all his friends will forgive me for being verbose when recalling, not only the great gifts, but delightful qualities of our lost friend."

"My worn-out old pencil will work with friendly gladness in an old friend's service," he writes to my father, who had asked him to draw a sketch for the *Cornhill Magazine*.

"I quite forgot that I dined with a group of doctors (a committee) at two o'clock. R.A. business after dinner. This necessity prevents me kissing hands before your departure. Don't become too Italian; don't speak broken English to your old friends on your return to our village, where you will find no end of us charmed to have you back again; and amongst them, let me say, you will find old E. L. sincerely glad to see his unvarying K. P. once more by that old fire-side."

So he writes in '63 to the friend to whom I owe the notes already given here. There is the "true ring," as he himself says, in these faithful greetings continued through a lifetime. And now that the life

is over, the friend still seems there, and his hand stretches faithfully from the little blue page.

He writes again September 2, 1864:—

"Do you think you could bring Mrs. Brookfield to my lion studio to-morrow between five and six o'clock? I have forgotten her address, or would not trouble you. Have you still got that cruel dagger in your sleeve? If you can also lasso my friend Brookfield I shall be grateful, and beg you to believe me your used-up old friend,

"E. L."

A little later I find a note written in better spirits. His work is done, and those great over-weighing sphinxes are no longer upon his mind. "The colossal clay," he says, "is now in Baron Marochetti's hands, casting in metal. When No. 2 is in a respectable condition remind me of Colonel Hamley's kind and highly flattering desire to see my efforts. We can, on the 3rd, discuss pictures, lions, and friends.

"Yours always, E. L."

What efforts his work had cost him, and what a price he paid for that which he achieved, may be gathered from a letter to another correspondent, which was written about this time:—

"Dear H.," he says, "I am much surprised by your note. The plates, large vignettes, are all *the same* size. The sketches from which they were engraved for the deer-stalking work being done in a sketch-book of a

particular shape and size. Those of the O form all the same, as also the others. I have got quite trouble enough; ten or twelve pictures about which I am tortured, and a large national monument to complete.... If I am bothered about everything and anything, no matter what, I know my head will not stand it much longer."

"I cannot even leave off to read Gosling's letter," he says, writing to this same T. H. "If you will call at three you will find me." Then comes, "the matter which you are kind enough to express willingness to look into;" it is one long record of good advice rendered and gratitude freely given. Elsewhere Landseer writes to this same correspondent. "I have just parted from your friend P. He strongly urged me going to 45, where I have been so kindly received of late. I told him you were an object for plunder in this world, and that I was ashamed of living on you as others do." This letter is written in a state of nervous irritation which is very painful: he wishes to make changes in his house; to build, to alter the arrangements; he does not know what to decide or where to go; the struggle of an over-wrought mind is beginning to tell. It is the penalty some men must pay for their gifts; but some generous souls may not think the price of a few weary years too great for a life of useful and ennobling work.

The letters grow sadder and more sad as time goes on. Miss Landseer has kindly sent me some, written to her between 1866 and 1869. The first is written from abroad:—

"I have made up my mind to return, to face the ocean! The weather is unfriendly—sharp wind and

spiteful rain. There is no denying the fact, since my arrival and during my sojourn here I have been less well. The doctors keep on saying it is on the nerves; hereafter they may be found to be in error. Kind Lady E. Peel keeps on writing for me to go to Villa Lammermoor, and says she will undertake my recovery. I desire to get home. With this feeling, I am to leave this to-morrow, pass some hours in Paris (with W. B., in a helpless state of ignorance of the French language); take the rail to Calais at night, if it does not blow cats and dogs; take the vessel to Dover; hope to be home on the 6th before two o'clock. If C. L. had started to come here he might have enjoyed *unlimitted* amusement and novelty. B. M. and I wrote to that effect; he leaving on Sunday night.... would have found me and B. M. waiting his arrival to bring him here to dinner."

The next is a letter from Balmoral, dated June 1867:—

"The Queen kindly commands me to get well here. She has to-day been twice to my room to show additions recently added to her already rich collection of photographs. Why, I know not, but since I have been in the Highlands I have for the first time felt wretchedly weak, without appetite. The easterly winds, and now again the unceasing cold rain, may possibly account for my condition, as I can't get out. Drawing tires me; however, I have done a little better to-day. The doctor residing in the castle has taken me in hand, and gives me leave to dine to-day with the Queen and the 'rest of the royal family'... Flogging

would be mild compared to my sufferings. No sleep, fearful cramp at night, accompanied by a feeling of faintness and distressful feebleness.... All this means that I shall not be home on the 7th."

He seems to have returned to Scotland a second time this year, and writes from Lochlinhart, Dingwall:—

"I made out my journey without pausing, starting on the eve of Thursday the 3rd, arriving here the evening of Friday (700 miles) the 4th. I confess to feeling jaded and tired. The whole of hills here present to the eye one endless mass of snow. It is really cold and winterly. Unless the weather recovers a more *generous* tone I shall not stay long, but at once return south to Chillingham. I was tempted yesterday to go out with Mr. Coleman to the low ground part of the forest, and killed my first shot at deer. I am paying for my boldness to-day, Sunday. All my joints ache; the lumbago has reasserted its unkindness; a warm bath is in requisition, and I am a poor devil. Unless we have the comfort of genial sunshine, I shall not venture on getting out.... I am naturally desirous to hear from you, and to receive a report of the progress of goings on at my home. We have here Mr. C. M. and a third gentleman, just arrived. Mr. Coleman has returned to London on account of his mother's ill-health. I have written to H., but in case he has not received my note, let him know my condition; say I shall be very glad to hear from him when he goes to Paris, and how long he remains in foreign parts. I

From an Island,

hope you have found Mr. B. and the maids respectfully attentive.

“My dear Jessy, affectionately yours,

“E. LANDSEER.”

The years seem to pass slowly as one reads these letters written in snow and rain and depression. Here is another dated Stoke Park, July, 1868:—

“Dear Jessy,—Strange enough, but I have only just found at the bottom of the bag your little package of letters. Many thanks for your pale green note, so far satisfactory. I believe it is best to yield to Mr. C.’s advice, and remain here another day or two. It is on the cards that I try my boldness by a run up to my home and back here the same day. It is quite a trial for me to be away from the meditation in the old studio—my works starving for my hand.”

The next letter is written in 1869 from Chillingham Castle, where he seems to have been at home and in sympathy, although he writes so sadly:—

“Very mortifying are the disappointments I have to face; one day seeming to give hope of a decided turn in favour of natural feeling, the next knocked down again. If my present scheme comes off, I shall not be at home again for ten days. If on my return I find myself a victim to the old impulsive misery, I shall go on to Eastwell Park, as the Duchess of Abercorn writes she will take every care of me. Since I last wrote I have been on a visit to the Dowager

Marchioness of Waterford, Ford Castle, a splendid old edifice, which C. L. would enjoy. Love to all."

I go on selecting at hazard from the letters before me:—

"Again accept my gratitude for your constant kindness," he writes to his faithful T. H. H. "The spell is broken in a mild form, but the work is too much for me. The long long walk in the dark, after the shot is fired, over rocks, bog, black moss, and through torrents, is more than enough *for twenty-five!*

"Poor C. has been very ill rewarded for his Highland enterprise. Fifteen hundred miles of peril on the rail; endless bad weather whilst he was here, without killing one deer; finally obliged to hurry off. . . . I have begged him not to think of undertaking another long journey on my account, even in the event of his being able to leave home. . . . It is like you to think of my request touching medicines for the poor here. . . . We have a dead calm after the wicked weather; not a dimple in the lake. I am not bold yet. Possibly reaction may take place in the quiet of the studio. I shall not start on great difficulties, but on child's play."

Here is another note, written in the following spring:—

"March 11, 1869.

"I know you like water better than oil; but in spite of your love of paper-staining, I venture to beg your acceptance of these oil studies, which you will receive as old friends from the Zoo.

"In some respects they will recall the interest you took in my labours for the Nelson lions, and I hope will always remind you of my admiration for your kindly nature, to say nothing of my endless obligations to your unceasing desire to aid a poor old man, nearly used up.

"Dear T. H. H., ever sincerely yours.

"E. LANDSEER."

Here is a note which is very characteristic:—

"Saturday Eve, 5th June.

"Dear H,—I am not quite content with myself touching the proposed suggestion of our taking advantage of an offer made by —— for the two pictures. He has not put his desire to have the pictures in writing, has he? We must talk it over to-morrow if you come up at four o'clock, or sooner. . . . The enclosed letters are most friendly, as you will see. Read them, and bring them up to-morrow. I am anything but well; botherations unfit me for healthy work. You must pat me on the back to-morrow; at the same time, if anything has turned up more attractive don't bind yourself to me.

"I should not dislike a drive or a walk to-morrow before dinner."

He writes once again:—

"I have a great horror of the *smell* of a trick, or a money motive."

"My dear Hills,—My health (or rather condition) is a mystery quite beyond human intelligence. I sleep

well seven hours, and awake tired and jaded, and do not rally till after luncheon. J. L. came down yesterday and did her very best to cheer me. She left at nine. . . . I return to my own home, in spite of a kind invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone to meet Princess Louise at breakfast.

"I wonder if you are free to-morrow. I shall try and catch you for a little dinner with me, tho' I am sure to find you better engaged.

"Dear H., ever thine,

"E. L."

Then comes the sad concluding scene—the long illness and the anxious watch. Was ever anyone more tenderly nursed and cared for? Those who had loved him in his bright wealth of life now watched the long days one by one, telling away its treasure. He was very weak in body latterly, but sometimes he used to go into the garden and walk round the paths, leaning on his sister's arm. One beautiful spring morning he looked up and said, "I shall never see the green leaves again;" but he did see them, Mrs. Mackenzie said. He lived through another spring. He used to lie in his studio, where he would have liked to die. To the very end he did not give up his work; but he used to go on, painting a little at a time, faithful to his task.

When he was almost at his worst—so someone told me—they gave him his easel and his canvas, and left him alone in his studio, in the hope that he might take up his work and forget his suffering. When they came back they found that he had painted the picture of a little lamb lying beside a lion. The Queen is

the owner of one of the last pictures he ever painted. She wrote to her old friend and expressed her admiration for it, and asked to become the possessor. Her sympathy brightened the sadness of those last days for him. It is well known that he appealed to her once, when haunted by some painful apprehensions, and that her wise and judicious kindness came to the help of his nurses. She sent him back a message: bade him not be afraid, and to trust to those who were doing their best for him, and in whom she herself had every confidence.

Sir Edwin once told Mr. Browning that he had thought upon the subject, and come to the conclusion that the stag was the bravest of all animals. Other animals are born warriors, they fight in a dogged and determined sort of way; the stag is naturally timid, trembling, vibrating with every sound, flying from danger, from the approach of other creatures, halting to fight. When pursued its first impulse is to escape; but when turned to bay and flight is impossible it fronts its enemies nobly, closes its eyes not to see the horrible bloodshed, and with its branching horns steadily tosses dog after dog, one upon the other, until overpowered at last by numbers it sinks to its death . . .

It seems to me, as I think of it, not unlike a picture of his own sad end. Nervous, sensitive, high-minded, working on to the last, he was brought to bay and overpowered by that terrible mental rout and misery.

He wished to die in his studio—his dear studio for which he used to long when he was away, and where he lay so many months expecting the end, but

it was in his own room that he slept away. His brother was with him. His old friend came into the room. He knew him, and pressed his hand . . .

As time goes on the men are born, one by one, who seem to bring to us the answers to the secrets of life, each coming in his place, and revealing in his turn according to his gift. Such men belong to nature's true priesthood, and among their names not forgotten, will be that of Edwin Landseer.

OUT OF THE SILENCE.

Only the prism's obstruction shows aright
The secret of a sunbeam : break its light
Into the jewelled bow from blankest white ;
So may a glory from defect arise.
Only by Deafness may the vexed Love wreak
Its insuppressive sense on brow and cheek ;
Only by Dumbness adequately speak,
As favoured mouth could never, thro' the eyes.

R. BROWNING.

THERE is a certain crescent in a distant part of London—a part distant, that is, from clubs and parks and the splendours of Rotten Row—where a great many good works and good intentions carried out, have taken refuge. House-rent is cheap, the place is wide and silent and airy; there are even a few trees to be seen opposite the windows of the houses, although we may have come for near an hour rattling through the streets of a neighbourhood dark and dreary in looks, and closely packed with people and children, and wants and pains and troubles of every tangible form for the colonists of Burton Crescent to minister to.

We pass by the Deaconesses' Home: it is not with them that we have to do to-day; and we tell the carriage to stop at the door of one of the houses, where a brass-plate is set up, with an inscription setting forth

what manner of inmates there are within, and we get out, send the carriage away, and ring the bell for admission.

One of the inmates peeped out from a doorway at us as we came into the broad old-fashioned passage. This was the little invalid of the establishment, we were afterwards told; she had hurt her finger, and was allowed to sit down below with the matron, instead of doing her lessons with the other children upstairs.

How curious and satisfactory these lessons are, anyone who likes may see and judge by making a similar pilgrimage to the one which F. and I undertook that wintry afternoon. The little establishment is a sort of short English translation of a great continental experiment of which an interesting account was given in the "Cornhill Magazine," under the title of "Dumb Men's Speech." Many of my friends were interested in it, and one day I received a note on the subject.

"Dumb men *do* speak in England," wrote a lady who had been giving her help and countenance to a similar experiment over here; and from her I learnt that this attempt to carry out the system so patiently taught by Brother Cyril was now being made, and that children were being shown how to utter their wants, not by signs, but by speech, and in English, at the Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children in Burton Crescent.

The great difference in this German system as opposed to the French, is that signs are as much as possible discarded after the beginning, and that the pupils are taught to read upon the lips of others, and to speak in words, what under the other system would

be expressed in writing or by signs. The well-known Abbé de l'Épée approved, they say, of this method, and wrote a treatise on the subject, and his successor, the Abbé Sicard, says (I am quoting from a quotation), "Le sourd-muet n'est donc totalement rendu à la société que lorsqu'on lui a appris à s'exprimer de vive voix et de lire la parole dans les mouvements des lèvres." This following very qualified sentence of his is also quoted in a report which has been sent me: "Prenez garde, que je n'ai point dit que le sourd-muet ne peut pas parler, mais ne sait pas parler. Il est possible que Mapuiz apprît à parler si j'avais le temps de le lui apprendre."

Time, hours after hours of patience, good-will, are given freely to this work by the good people who direct the various establishments in the Netherlands where the deaf and dumb are now instructed.

How numerous and carefully organised these institutions are may be gathered from a little pamphlet written by the great Director Hirsch of Rotterdam, who first introduced this system into the schools, and who has lately made a little journey from school to school, to note the progress of the undertaking he has so much at heart. Brussels and Ghent and Antwerp and Bruges, he visited all these and other outlying establishments, and was received everywhere with open arms by the good brothers who have undertaken to teach the system he advocates. Dr. Hirsch is delighted with everything he sees until he comes to Bruges, where he says that he is struck by the painful contrast which its scholars present as compared to the others he had visited on his way. "They looked less gay (moins enjoué) than any of those he had seen."

But this is explained to him by the fact that in this school the French method is still partly taught, and he leaves after a little exhortation to the Director, and a warning that public opinion will be against him if he continues the ancient system as opposed to the newer and more intelligible one. It is slower in the beginning, says the worthy Doctor; it makes greater demands upon our patience, our time, our money, but it carries the pupil on far more rapidly and satisfactorily after the early steps are first mastered, until, when at last the faculty of hearing with the eyes has been once acquired, isolation exists no longer, the sufferer is given back to the world, and everyone he meets is a new teacher to help to bring his study to perfection.

1873. The Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children in Burton Crescent was only started as an experiment. The lady who wrote to me guaranteed the rent and various expenses for a year, after which the experiment was to stand upon its own merits. Since the opening of the home modifications have taken place in its arrangements, and finally it has been determined to open a second school for the education of any little Christians who, as well as the little Jews, might come as day-scholars there, to be taught with much labour and infinite patience and pains what others learn almost unconsciously and without an effort.

F. and I have been going upstairs all this time, and come into a back-room or board-room, opening with folding-doors into the schoolroom, where the children are taught. As we went in the young master, M. von Praagh (he is a pupil, I believe, of Dr. Hirsch's)

came forward to receive us, and welcomed us in the most friendly way. The children all looked up at us with bright flashing eyes—little boys and little girls in brown pinafores, with cheery little smiling faces peeping and laughing at us along their benches. In the room itself there is the usual apparatus—the bit of chalk, the great slate for the master to write upon, the little ones for the pupils, the wooden forms, the pinafores, the pictures hanging from the walls, and, what was touching to me, the usual little games and frolics and understandings going on in distant corners, and even under the master's good-natured eye. He is there to bring out, and not to repress, and the children's very confidence in his kindness and sympathy seems to be one of the conditions of their education and cure.

He clapped his hands, and a little class came and stood round the big slate—a big girl, a little one, two little boys. "Attention," says the teacher, and he begins naming different objects, such as fish, bread, chamois, coal-scuttle. All these words the children read off his lips by watching the movement of his mouth. As he says each word the children brighten, seize the idea, rush to the pictures that are hanging on the wall, discover the object he has named, and bring it in breathless triumph. "Tomb," said the master, after naming a variety of things, and a big girl, with a beaming face, pointed to the ground and nodded her head emphatically, grinning from ear to ear. But signs are not approved of in this establishment, and, as I have said, the great object is to get them to talk. And it must be remembered that they are only beginners, and that the home has only been

opened a few months. One little thing, scarcely more than a baby, who had only lately come in, had spoken for the first time that very day—"â, â, â," cried the little creature. She was so much delighted with her newly-gotten power that nothing would induce her to leave off exercising it. She literally shouted out her plaintive little "â". It was like the note of a little lamb, for, of course, being deaf, she had not yet learnt how to modulate her voice, and she had to be carried off into a distant corner by a bigger girl, who tried to amuse her and keep her still.

"It is an immense thing for the children," said M. von Praagh, "to feel that they are not cut off hopelessly and markedly from communication with their fellow-creatures; the organs of speech being developed, their lungs are strengthened, their health improves. You can see a change in the very expression of their faces, they delight in using their newly-acquired power, and won't use the finger-alphabet even among themselves." And, as if to corroborate what he was saying, there came a cheery vociferous outbreak of "â's" from the corner where the little girl had been installed with some toys, and all the other children laughed.

I do not know whether little Jew boys and girls are on an average cleverer than little Christians, or whether, notwithstanding their infirmity, the care and culture bestowed upon them has borne this extra fruit; but these little creatures were certainly brighter and more lively than any dozen Sunday-school children taken at hazard. Their eyes danced, their faces worked with interest and attention, they seemed to catch light from their master's face, from one another's, from ours as we spoke; their eagerness, their cheerfulness and

childish glee, were really remarkable; they laughed to one another much like any other children, peeped over their slates, answered together when they were called up. It was difficult to remember that they were deaf, though, when they spoke, a great slowness, indistinctness, and peculiarity was of course very noticeable. But these are only the pupils of a month or two, be it remembered. A child with all its faculties is nearly two years learning to talk.

One little fellow with a charming expressive face and eyes like two brown stars, came forward, and ciphered and read to us, and showed us his copy-book. He is beginning Hebrew as well as English. His voice is pleasant, melancholy, but quite melodious, and, to my surprise, he addressed me by my name, a long name with many letters in it. M. von Praagh had said it to him on his lips, for of course it is not necessary for the master to use his voice, and the motion of the lips is enough to make them understand. The name of my companion, although a short one, is written with four difficult consonants, and only one vowel to bind them together, and it gave the children more trouble than mine had done; but after one or two efforts the little boy hit upon the right way of saying it, and a gleam of satisfaction came into his face as well as his master's. M. von Praagh takes the greatest possible pains with, and interest in every effort and syllable. He holds the children's hands and accentuates the words by raising or letting them fall; he feels their throats and makes them feel his own. It would be hard indeed if so much patience and enthusiasm produced no results to reward it.

"What o'clock is it?" M. von Praagh asked.

"Four o'clock," said the little boy, without looking up.

"How do you know?" asked the master.

"Miss —— is come," said the little fellow, laughing. This was a lady who came to give the girls their sewing lesson so many times a week.

I need not describe the little rooms upstairs, with the usual beds in rows, and the baths, the play-room—the arrangements everywhere for the children's comfort and happiness. If the school is still deaf and dumb for most practical purposes, yet the light is shining in; the children are happy, and understand what is wanted of them, and are evidently in the right way. For the short time he has been at work as yet, M. von Praagh has worked wonders.

Babies, as I have just said, with all their faculties are about two years learning to speak. There is a curious crisis, which anyone who has had anything to do with children must have noticed, a sort of fever of impatience and vexation which attacks them when they first begin to find out that people do not understand what they say. I have seen a little girl burst into passionate tears of vexation and impatience because she could not make herself immediately understood. I suppose the pretty croonings and chatterings which go before speech are a sort of natural exercise by which babies accustom themselves to words, and which they mistake at first for real talking. Real words come here and there in the midst of the baby-language—detaching themselves by degrees out of the wonderful labyrinth of sound—real words out of the language which they are accustomed to hear all about them,

and something in this way, to these poor little deaf folks, the truth must dawn out of the confusion of sights and signs surrounding them.

This marvellous instinctive study goes on in secret in the children's minds. After their first few attempts at talking they seem to mistrust their own efforts. They find out that their pretty prattle is no good; they listen, they turn over words in their minds, and whisper them to themselves as they are lying in their little cribs, and then one day the crisis comes, and a miracle is worked, and the child can speak.

When children feel that their first attempts are understood they suddenly regain their good temper and wait for a further inspiration. They have generally mastered the great necessities of life in this very beginning of their efforts: "pooty," "toos," "ben butta," "papa," "mama," "nana" for "nurse," and "dolly," and they are content. Often a long time passes without any further apparent advance, and then comes perhaps a second attack of indignation. I know of one little babe who had hardly spoken before, and who had been very cross and angry for some days past, and who horrified its relations by suddenly standing up in its crib one day, rosy and round-eyed, and saying *Bess my soul* exactly like an old charwoman who had come into the nursery.

A friend of mine to whom I was speaking quite bore out my remarks. He said his own children had all passed through this phase, which comes after the child has learned to think and before he is able to speak. One's heart aches as one thinks of those whose life is doomed to be a life of utter silence in the full

stream of the mighty flow of words in which our lives are set, to whom no crisis of relief may come, who have for generations come and gone silent and alone, and set apart by a mysterious dispensation from its very own best blessings and tenderest gifts.

I was thinking of this yesterday as we went walking across the downs in the Easter-tide. I could hardly tell whether it was sight or sound that delighted us most as we went along upon the turf: the sound of life in the bay at the foot of the downs, the flowing of the waves just washing over the low-ridged rocks with which our coast is set: the gentle triumphant music overhead of the larks soaring and singing in the sunshine. The sea and the shingle were all sparkling, while great bands like moonlight in daylight lay white and brilliant on the horizon of the waters. The very stones seemed to cry out with a lovely Easter hymn of praise; and sound and sight to be so mingled that one could scarcely tell where one began or the other ended.

If by this new system the patient teachers cannot give everything to their pupils, the ripple of the sea, the song of the lark, yet they can do very much towards it, by leading the children's minds to receive the great gifts of nature through the hearts and sympathy of others, and give them above all that best and dearest gift of all in daily life, without which nature itself fails to comfort and to charm, the companionship of their fellow-creatures and of intelligences answering and responding to their own.

P.S. 1873. M. von Praagh is now the director of an institution in Fitzroy Square, for teaching teachers, as well as the children themselves, the art of lip-reading. This institution is not for Jews, but for anyone who likes to come. The system is absolutely the same as that already described in the article. The children seemed very eager, good, and attentive; they could speak to one another, and evidently greatly preferred this plan to the finger-sign system to which we are all accustomed. M. von Praagh told us that his pupils came from various parts of the country—from Ireland, from Birmingham, from Scotland. He is very much against their boarding together in one establishment, thinking it far better for them to live as other people do, and to mix with others habitually. The children are therefore only day scholars; they board out in the neighbourhood. The room is large; there is plenty of light, and sound too; they are taught all the usual branches of education, in addition to the habit of utterance. Those children I saw five years ago, he told me, are some of them already out in the world, and earning their living. One is a watchmaker, another a line-engraver. They have a certificated drawing mistress in the school to teach them, who showed us a really admirable drawing by one of them, and pointed with pride to a tall boy in the window, a pupil a head and shoulders taller than herself, who had gained a prize at the South Kensington Museum.

Our conversation, it must be confessed, was somewhat laborious, but some allowance must be made for the natural shyness of a visitor confronted with so many pairs of bright and eager eyes.

“Côme a-gain,” said the children, in voices and

accents as different as though they could hear. It was indeed very difficult to realise that they did *not* hear; they gave one more the impression of little foreigners imperfectly acquainted with English than of victims of so sad a fate; and I think the best testimony we can bear to the success of M. von Praagh's system is that it did not occur to us to pity anyone of them, except, perhaps, a boy and girl who did not come forward nor attempt to speak.

Teachers begin upon 50*l.* a year, and, if the system were once established, might make a comfortable livelihood. The director told us, however, that he had great difficulty in finding such pupils.

In a very interesting lecture given at the Society of Arts, Dr. Dasent speaks of the great superiority of the system practised by M. von Praagh over the French course, in which children were "taught by signs, and consequently unfitted to enter upon the duties of life and to communicate freely with their fellows. If all the world were an institution for educating the deaf and dumb, one might be satisfied with such a result; but as it is not, we must necessarily pronounce any system which contents itself with educating its pupils for life in the institution, and in the institution alone, self-condemned."

'Elsewhere Dr. Dasent says:

"So perfectly has this process of education been carried out in individual cases, that persons thus educated are able to carry away with them a sermon or a speech by only observing the motion of the lips and the play of the countenance of the speaker or preacher, and in one case that I have heard of, the preacher,

ignorant of the infirmity under which a regular attendant at his church was suffering, sent to beg that and so would not stare at him so hard as it put him out in his sermon."

TOILERS AND SPINSTERS.

Je garde la fidélité à tout le monde, j'essaye d'être toujours [véritable, sincère, et fidèle à tous les hommes, et j'ai une tendresse de cœur pour ceux à qui Dieu m'a uni plus étroitement, et soit que je sois seul ou à la vue de tous les hommes, j'ai en toutes mes actions la vue de Dieu, qui les doit juger et à qui je les ai toutes consacrées.—PASCAL.

If one is to believe some people, there are a certain number of unmarried ladies whose wail has of late been constantly dinning in the ears of the public, and who, with every comfort and necessary of life provided, are supposed to be pining away in lonely gloom and helplessness. There are a score of books written for their benefit with which they doubtless wile away their monotonous hours. Old Maids, spinsters, the solitary, heart-broken women of England, have quite a literature of their own, which demands a degree of public sympathy for this particular class which would be insulting almost in individual cases, except, indeed, that there are not individual cases, and very few, who, while desiring such commiseration for others, would not quite decline to present themselves as its deserving objects.

To come forward, for instance, and say, "Oh, alas, alas! what a sad, dull, solitary, useless, unhappy, unoccupied life is mine! I can only see a tombstone at the end of my path, and willows and cypresses on either side, and flowers, all dead and faded, crumbling

beneath my feet; and my only companions are memories, and hair ornaments, and ghosts, prosy, stupid old ghosts, who go on saying the same things over and over and over again, and twaddling about all the years that are gone away for ever." This is no exaggeration. This is what the "thoughtful" spinster is supposed to say in her reflective moments. There are Sunsets of spinster life, Moans of old maids, Words to the wasted, Lives for the lonely, without number, all sympathising with these griefs, such as they are, urging the despondent to hide their sufferings away in their own hearts, to show no sign, to gulp their bitter draught, to cheer, tend, console others in their need, although unspeakably gloomy themselves. One book, I remember, after describing a life passed in abstract study, in nursing sick people, in visiting unhappy ones, in relieving the needy, exclaims (or something very like it):—"But, ah! what at best is such a life as this, whose chief pleasures and consolations are to be found in the cares and the sorrows of others? Married life, indeed, has its troubles;" these single but impartial critics generally go on to state; "but then there is companionship, sympathy, protection"—one knows the sentence by heart. "Not so is it with those whose lonely course we should be glad to think that we had cheered by the few foregoing remarks, whose sad destiny has been pointed out by a not unfeeling hand. Who knows but that there may be compensation in a lot of which the blank monotony is at least untroubled by the anxieties, and fears, and hopes of the married?"

These are not the exact words, but it is very much the substance, of many of the volumes, as anybody who chooses may see. Where there really seems to be so

much kindness and gentle-heartedness, one is the more impatient of a certain melancholy, desponding spirit, which seems to prevail.

But what have the ladies, thus acknowledging their need, been about all these years? Who has forced them to live alone? Is there nobody to come forward and give them a lift? What possible reason can there be to prevent unmarried, any more than married, people from being happy (or unhappy), according to their circumstances—from enjoying other pleasures more lively than the griefs and sufferings of their neighbours? Are unmarried people shut out from all theatres, concerts, picture-galleries, parks, and gardens? May not they walk out on every day of the week? Are they locked up all the summer time, and only let out when an east wind is blowing? Are they forced to live in one particular quarter of the town? Does Mudie refuse their subscriptions? Are they prevented from taking in “The Times,” from going out to dinner, from match-making, visiting, gossiping, drinking tea, talking, and playing the piano? If a lady has had three husbands, could she do more? May not spinsters, as well as bachelors, give their opinions on every subject, no matter how ignorant they may be; travel about anywhere, in any costume, however convenient; climb up craters, publish their experiences, tame horses, wear pork-pie hats, write articles in the “Saturday Review”? They have gone out to battle in top-boots, danced on the tight-rope, taken up the Italian cause, and harangued the multitudes. They have gone to prison for distributing tracts; they have ascended Mont Blanc, and come down again. They have been doctors, lawyers, clergywomen, squires—as men have been milliners, dress-

makers, ballet-dancers, ladies' hair-dressers. They have worn waistcoats, shirt-collars, white neckcloths, wide-awakes. They have tried a hundred wild schemes, pranks, fancies; they have made themselves ridiculous, respected, particular, foolish, agreeable; and small blame to them if they have played their part honestly, cheerfully, and sincerely. I know of no especial ordinance of nature to prevent men, or women either, from being ridiculous at times; and we should hate people a great deal more than we do, if we might not laugh at them now and then. To go back to our spinsters, they have crossed the seas in shoals, been brave as men when their courage came to be tried; they have farmed land, kept accounts, opened shops, inherited fortunes, played a part in the world, been presented at Court. What is it that is to render life to them only one long regret? Cannot a single woman know tenderest love, faithful affection, sincerest friendship? And if Miss A. considers herself less fortunate than Mrs. B., who has an adoring husband always at home, and 10,000*l.* a year, she certainly does not envy poor Mrs. C., who has to fly to Sir Cresswell Cresswell to get rid of a "life companion" who beats her with his umbrella, spends her money, and knocks her down instead of "lifting her up."

With all this it is dismally true that single women many, and many of them, have a real trouble to complain of; and one which is common also to married people, that is, want of adequate means; and when the barest necessities are provided, life can only be to many a long privation; from books, from amusement, from friendly intercourse, from the pleasure of giving, and from that social equality which is almost impos-

sible without a certain amount of money; but then surely it is the want of money, and not of husbands, which brings such things to this pass. Husbands, the statistics tell us, it is impossible to provide; money, however, is more easily obtained.

For mere sentimental griefs for persons whose comforts are assured, and whose chief trouble is that they do not like the life they lead, that they have aspirations and want sympathy, I think fewer books of consolation might suffice. The great "Times" newspaper alone, as it turns its flapping page, contains many an answer to our questions; and it might supply more than one need for each separate want, and change how many vague things, dull dreams, hopeless prayers, into facts and human feelings, into boys and girls, into work, into pains and sympathy, into old shoes, and patches, and rags, and darns, into ignorance and dawning knowledge and gratitude. The whole clamour is so much mixed up together that it is very difficult to separate even facts and feelings from one another. It is not the sorrow of others which makes the happiness of those who are able to find out some means for lessening that sorrow, but the relief of their relief which can only be truly earned and felt by those who have worked for it. And the best work and the most grateful surely. No one can witness the first-fruits of such good labour without coming away, for a little time at least, more Christian and gentle-hearted.

But it can only be by long patience and trouble that such things can be achieved. For to sympathise, I suppose people must know sorrow in equal measure; to help they must take pains; to give they must deny

themselves; to know how to help others best they must learn themselves.

And the knowledge of good and of evil, as it is taught to us by our lives, is a hard lesson indeed; learnt through failure, through trouble, through shame and humiliation, forgotten, perhaps neglected, broken off, taken up again and again.

With pauses oft a many and silence strange,
And silent oft it seems when silent it is not;
Revivals, too, of unexpected change

This lesson taught with such great pains has been sent to all mankind—not excepting old maids, as some people would almost have it: such persons as would make life one long sentimental penance, during which single women should be constantly occupied, dissecting, inspecting, regretting, examining themselves, living among useless little pricks and self-inflicted smarts, and wasting wilfully, and turning away from the busy business of life, and still more from that gracious gift of existence, and that bounty of happiness and content, and gratitude, which all the clouds of heaven rain down upon us.

When one sees what some good women can do with great hearts and small means, how bravely they can work for others and for themselves, how many good chances there are for those who have patience to seek and courage to hold, how much there is to be done—and I do not mean in works of charity only, but in industry, and application, and determination—how every woman in raising herself may carry along a score of others with her—when one sees all this, one is ashamed and angry to think of the melancholy, moping spirit within us which, out of sheer dullness

and indolence, would tempt some of us to waste so many hours of daylight in gloomy sentiment and inertness.

Homes, husbands, sons, and daughters, such sacred ties are sweet, but they are not the only ones nor the only sacred things in life, and some examples seem indeed to show us that love may be strong enough and wide enough to take the world itself for a home, and the deserted for children, and the sick and the sorrowful for a family. Married or unmarried, such lives are not alone.

There is certainly a different feeling about education now from that which formerly existed. The London Association of Schoolmistresses, established for the purpose of meeting and talking over matters concerned with education, indicates a new spirit and interest in the work. The Cambridge scheme for local examination has been of real and practical benefit, and there is also the system for education by correspondence. One friend, whom I will not name, has given leisure, energy, and resource to the work, and has sown his seed broadcast in the endeavour to raise the aim and widen the span of the ordinary school-girl mind. It is not so much at the onset of life, in the early spring-time, that the result of such teaching will tell; but a little later, when the time for the harvest comes round, and the fields are ripening, then the sheaves may be reaped and sorted, and the work of the labourer and the effort of the soil repaid.

In education, that mighty field, as you sow the seed, that strange incongruous seed of human intelligence cast forth hour by hour in books and words, in the secret meditations and works of the dead as well

as the deeds of the living; so it grows again, new, revived, gathering life from every breath of air and ray of light. But, nevertheless, it happens not unfrequently that while some good soil is utilised and worked and turned to good and useful ends, other soil not less good and fruitful is neglected or ill-treated and scantily supplied, diluted with platitude, planted with parsley and cucumbers and with asparagus, when under more favourable circumstances it might have grown wheat or wholesome crops in bountiful measure.

What Arnold did for schoolboys and schoolmasters, inventing freedom for them and a rescue from the tyranny of commonplace and opposition, and bringing in the life of truth and commonsense to overwhelm schoolroom fetishes and opposition, some people have been trying to do for home-girls, schoolgirls, and their teachers, for whom surely some such revolution has long been needed. Of late years a very distinct impression has grown up (by the efforts of the people I am alluding to) that even schoolgirls and governesses are human beings, with certain powers of mind which are worthy of consideration, and for whom the best cultivation, as well as the worst, might be provided with advantage.

The College for Ladies has proposed to itself some such aim of good teaching and intelligent apprehension. There is also a home at Cambridge for the use of ladies who wish to attend the professors' lectures. When the home began, with Miss Clough as its principal, it only consisted of eight or nine pupils; there are now more than twenty, and the numbers are steadily increasing. The little home has moved from Regent Street, where it was first opened, to an old

house in a green garden not far from the river, where the very elms and gables seem to combine in a tranquil concentration. The girls meet together, they are taught by people who do it from interest in the teaching itself; they come into contact with cultivated minds, perhaps for the first time in their lives.

"We teach the girls first for the examination which the university has instituted specially for women," writes a friend; "then if they like to stay on, we teach them further, just what we teach the young men. About half of them are preparing to be teachers; the rest come for pure love of learning. We do not want to have only the professional ones, though we are specially anxious to aid these. . . ."

"I am glad that you hear people speak favourably of the results of our examination. What we want to do is just what you describe—to aid in the great stimulus that is everywhere being given to girls' education. This is good for all, while for the few to whom the acquisition of knowledge can be the pleasure or even the business of life, we want to provide guidance and encouragement, and a little material evidence if possible. . . ."

"I have taught some of the girls. It was an instructive change from teaching men. Most of them insist on understanding what they learn, and won't take words for thoughts. Even the stupider ones that I have met with in my teaching do not write the absolute rubbish which stupid men write. I mention this because most people would expect the opposite."

What is it, then, that we would wish for, for ourselves and for the younger selves who are growing up around us? Eyes to see, ears to hear, sincerity and

the power of being taught and of receiving the truth; and thus, as I hear A. F. saying, by being taken out of ourselves, and farthest removed from this narrow domain into the world all about us, do we most learn to be ourselves and to fulfil the intention of our being. All nature comes to our help, all arts, all sciences. What is there that does not contribute to the divine reiteration? The problem of education is merged into that of life itself, when people begin to sort themselves out and to fall into their places, and then for the women who do not marry comes a further question to solve; and some write books, and some write articles, and some put on long black cloaks, and some wear smart chignons, and the business of living goes on. For the motherly woman, those who have homely hearts, there are real joys and fulfilments undreamt of perhaps in earlier life, when no compromise with perfect happiness seemed to be possible.

The rest of the human race is not so totally devoid of all affection and natural feeling that it does not respond to the love and fidelity of an unmarried friend or relation. There are children to spare and to tuck up in their little beds, young people to bring their sunshine and interest into autumn; there are friendships lifelong and unchanging, which are among a single woman's special privileges; as years go by she finds more and more how truly she may count upon them. Nor are her men friends less constant and reliable than the women with whom she has passed her life. Some amount of sentiment clings to these old men and women friendships: and some sentiment, perhaps, belongs to every true feeling; it is the tint that gives life to the landscape.

As for work, whichever way we turn are the things that we have left undone. "Come, pluck us! come, pluck us!" cry the fruits as they hang from the branches. There are a thousand plans, schemes, enterprises, fitted to their different minds. Some go into sisterhoods and put their lives into the hands of others, who may or may not be wiser than themselves; others wander into the wide realms of art and worship at æsthetic altars; others are nurses, administrators. We need not despair of seeing women officially appointed as guardians of the poor. Regarding the much debated question of religious and secular organisation, I cannot refrain from quoting a passage from a book,* that speaks straightly and wisely in solution of a problem that has occurred to many hundreds of women before this:—

"Secular associations do not undertake to discipline the souls of their members, nor to afford them any special opportunity of expressing their devotion to God as the common Father, but they can no more hinder the expression of such feelings than they can hinder the growth of the soul. On the contrary, they give all the scope that naturally belongs to charitable action, for the expression of such feelings in deed as well as in word. They neither seek for nor value pain and humiliation as a means of proving devotion; on the contrary, they avoid all that might injure health, or distract attention, or encourage spiritual vanity as interruptions to the one main object—the good of the poor. Those who wish to see charitable organisations organised upon a purely secular basis wish it not only because they believe singleness of aim to be the first condition of perfect success; not only because the poor

* *The Service of the Poor*, by C. E. Stephen.

will probably be most effectually served by those who do it from pure love of them, without thought of their own spiritual interests; not only because secular association breaks none of the domestic interests and social ties which they believe to be divinely appointed, and full both of blessing and power for all good ends; but also because they think that to provide an organisation for the systematic cultivation and exhibition of love and devotion, is to depart from Christian simplicity, and must tend in the long run to injure true humility, sincerity, and even the love and devotion themselves which are thus artificially stimulated."

"L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête," says Pascal; "et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête."

But the angels and the beasts, far apart though they may be, come together both toiling in the field of life, each doing their part in the work: the beasts cultivate the ground, the angels reap and store the good grain. The bread of life itself cannot come to fruition without labour, and the sacrament of brotherly love, union, and faithful promise must be kneaded with toil.

FIVE O'CLOCK TEA.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned!
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze;
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.
At once they gratify their scent, and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.

RAPE OF THE LOCK.

FIVE o'clock tea is rarely good. It is either strongly flavoured with that peculiar bitter taste which shows that the tea has been kept waiting and neglected too long, or else it is cold, weak, and vapid. These remarks apply strictly to the tea itself; for, as a general rule, it is the pleasantest hostess who provides the worst tea, and it would almost seem, notwithstanding a few noticeable exceptions, that a lively conversation and a pleasant wit are incompatible with boiling water, and a sufficient supply of cream, and sugar, and souchong. But, fortunately, the popularity of five o'clock tea does not depend upon its intrinsic merits. Five o'clock friendship, five o'clock gossip, five o'clock confidence and pleasant confabulation, are what people look for in these harmless cups; a little sugar dexterously dropped in, a little human kindness, and just enough pungency to give a flavour to the whole con-

From an Island.

coction, is what we all like sometimes to stir up together for an hour or so, and to enjoy, with the addition of a little buttered muffin, from five to six o'clock, when the day's work is over, and a pleasant, useless, comfortable hour comes round.

Everybody must have observed that there are certain propitious hours in the day when life appears under its best and most hopeful aspects. Five o'clock is to a great many their golden time, when the cares which haunt the early rising have been faced and surmounted; when the mid-day sun is no longer blazing down and exhibiting all the cracks and worn places which we would fain not see; when the labours of the day are over for many, and their vigils have not yet begun; and when a sense of soon-coming rest and refreshment has its unconscious effect upon our spirits. Whether for work or for play, five o'clock is one of the hours that could be the least spared out of the twenty-four we have to choose from. Two o'clock might be sacrificed; and I doubt whether from ten o'clock to eleven is not a difficult pass to surmount for many: neither work nor play comes congenially just after breakfast, but both are welcome at this special five o'clock tea-time. A painter told me once that just a little before sunset, at the close of a long day's toil, there comes a certain light which is more beautiful and more clear and still than any other, and in which he can do better work than at any other time during the day. It is so, I believe, with some people who make writing their profession, and who often find that after wrestling and struggling with intractable ideas and sentences all through a long and wearisome task, at the close, just as they are giving up in despair,

a sudden inspiration comes to them, thoughts and suggestions rush upon them, words fall into their places, and the pen flies along the paper. Miss Martineau says in one of her essays that after writing for seven hours, the eighth hour is often worth all the others put together.

There is no comparison, to my mind, between the merits of luncheons and breakfasts and five o'clock tea, in a social point of view. People sometimes experimentalise upon the practicabilities of the minor meals, but pleasant as luncheons or breakfasts may be at the time, a sense of remorse and desolation when the entertainment is over generally prevents anything like an agreeable reminiscence. One has wasted one's morning; one has begun at the wrong end of the day; what is to be the next step on one's downward career? Is one to go backwards all through one's usual avocations, and wind up at last by ordering dinner just before going to bed? The writer can call to mind several such meetings, where persons were present whom it was an honour and a delight to associate with, and where the talk was better worth listening to than commonly happens when several remarkable people are brought together; and yet, when all was over, and one came away into the mid-day sunshine, an uncomfortable feeling of remorse and general dissatisfaction, of not knowing exactly what to do next or how to get through the rest of the day, seemed almost to overpower any pleasant remembrances. It was like the afternoon of a wedding-breakfast, without even a wedding. No such subtle Nemesis attends the little gathering round the three-legged five o'clock tea-tables. You know exactly the precise right thing to do when the tea-

party is over. You go home a little late, you hurriedly dress for dinner with the anticipation of an agreeable evening, to which your own spirits, which have been cheered and enlivened already, may possibly contribute; and the knowledge that each other member of the party is also hurrying away with a definite object, instead of straggling out into the world all uncertain and undecided, must unconsciously add to your comfort.

Two o'clock is much more the hour of friendship than of sentiment. Sentimental scenes take place (it would seem) more frequently in the morning and evening, or out of doors in the afternoon. One can quite imagine that after breakfasts or luncheons the stranded guests might fly to sentiment to fill up the ensuing blank vacancy. But although one has never heard of an offer being made at five o'clock tea, the story of the engagement—more or less interesting—and all the delightful particulars of the trousseau, and settlements, and wedding presents, are more fully discussed then than at any other time. What is *not* discussed at five o'clock tea, besides the usual gossip and chatter of the day? How much of sympathy, confidence, wise and kindly warning and encouragement it has brought to us, as well as the pleasure of companionship in one of its simplest forms! It is now the fashion in some houses to play at whist at five o'clock, but this seems a horrible innovation and interruption to confidence and friendship. If the secret which Belinda has to impart is that she happens to hold four trumps in her hand, if the advice required is whether she shall play diamonds or hearts; if Florio is only counting his points, and speculating on his partner's lead, then,

indeed, all this is a much ado about nothing. Let us pull down the little three-legged altars, upset the cream jugs and sugar-basins, and extinguish the sacred flames of spirits of wine with all the water in the tea-kettle.

I do not know whether to give the preference to summer or winter for these entertainments. At this time of the year one comes out of the chill tempests without to bright hearths, warmth, comfort, and kindly welcome. The silver kettle boils and bubbles, the tea-table is ready spread, your frozen soul melts within you, you sink into a warm fireside corner, and perhaps one of the friends that you love best begins with a familiar voice to tell you of things which mutually concern and interest you both, until the door opens and one or two more come in, and the talk becomes more general. In summer time Lady de Coverley has her tea-table placed under the shade of the elm trees on the lawn. There is a great fragrance of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons all about; there are the low seats and the muslin dresses in a semicircle under the bright green branches; shadows come flickering, and gusts of summer sweetness; insects buzzing and sailing away, silver and china wrought in bright array, and perhaps a few vine-leaves and strawberries to give colour to the faint tints of the equipage. You may almost see the summer day spreading over the fields and slopes, where the buttercups blaze like a cloth of gold, and the beautiful cattle are browsing.

Five o'clock is also the nursery tea-time, when a little round-eyed company, perched up in tall chairs, struggles with mugs, and pinafores, and large slices of bread and butter. I must confess that the nursery ar-

rangements have always seemed to me capable of improvement, and I have never been able to understand why good boys and girls should be rewarded with such ugly mugs, or why the bread and butter should always pervade the whole atmosphere as it does nowhere else. It is curious to note what very small things have an unconscious influence upon our comfort at times, and I could quite understand what a friend meant the other day when she told me that whenever anybody came to see her with whom she wished to have a comfortable talk, she was accustomed to move to a certain corner in her drawing-room, where there was a snug place for herself and an easy chair which her guest was certain to take. Those who have been so fortunate as to occupy that easy chair can certify to the complete success of the little precaution.

Of the sadder aspect of my subject, of the tea-parties over and dispersed for ever, of old familiar houses now closed upon us, of friends parted and estranged, who no longer clink their cups together, I do not care to write.

The readers of "Pendennis" may remember Mrs. Shandon and little Mary at their five o'clock tea, and the extract with which I conclude:—

"So Mrs. Shandon went to the cupboard, and in lieu of a dinner made herself some tea. And in those varieties of pain of which we spoke anon, what a part of confidante has that poor tea-pot played ever since the kindly plant was introduced among us! What myriads of women have cried over it, to be sure! what sick-beds it has smoked by! what fevered lips have received refreshment from out of it! Nature meant

y gently by women when she made that tea-plant;
l with a little thought, what a series of pictures and
ups the fancy may conjure up, and assemble round
tea-pot and cup."

CLOSED DOORS.

E'en tho' temptation press thee hard and sore,
And strength is failing, and that prayer for grace
Was thy last effort, and thou canst no more.

Now, on some week-day, if thy heart be hot
Within thee to thank Him for mercy given,
Towards His sanctuary go thou not!
Its doors are shut, and back thou wilt be driven!

And if wide from thy gracious Lord thou'st erred,
Yet late repentant to thine heart are cut,
Repent elsewhere; for here no vows are heard:
God's ears are open, but his church is shut!

Closed Doors—HON. MRS. KNOX.

To the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette.

SIR,—I am writing to you very early on a Sunday morning, and as I write the bell is ringing of a little whitewashed chapel standing by a wooden bridge and a rushing torrent, and down from the high green Alps, stream-crossed and pine-scented, the peasants are coming at its call. All round about this plateau are white, dazzling snow mountains and green slopes, where, on week days, the peasants are at work early and late reaping the grasses, and the grey oxen come down the precipitous sides of the mountains, dragging the sledges upon which the sweet dry hay is piled, or it may be a household goods of some little family flitting from

its high Alpine home to its chalet in the village down below. The husband goes first, with his arm round the broad-horned head; the mother follows with steady step, through the pine trees, carrying a little Italian peasant baby in her arms. In the valley where we are staying there are perhaps three or four little wooden houses by the stream, but a good many seem to have flown up right out of the valley and perched upon the mountains, all about our low stone house with the stone-piled roof, which has been erected for those who come to drink the waters that flow from the iron spring in the valley.

Among the company are some Milanese ladies, convent-bred, who go often to the little whitewashed chapel, and whose many questions as to the ways of our Church, its beliefs, its consolations, I sometimes find it difficult to answer. To them their Church means religion itself, to us it is (or should be) but an expression of something higher. They ask me if it is to our Church we go for consolation in trouble, for daily sustainment and advice. "Ah, no," cries the youngest of the party, "your Church is not a friend to you as ours is to us." Practically, perhaps, she is in the right, if a Protestant may concede so much.

These are days of change, of eager debate of words that do not spare; on every side people are looking out for the fall of superstructures erected by our predecessors, at whose traditions this impatient age not unnaturally rebels, just as men of forty sometimes rebel at the professions made for them by men of twenty-three. We see beacons destroyed or tottering (in truth they are beacons no longer, for the harbour is closed and the tide is sweeping elsewhere), pre-

visions are evaded, professions turned into protests. To some consciences, perhaps, Faith in spiritual matters may mean love; to others it may mean hope; but not to many, is it Faith any longer; and such as these, who would not willingly desert the ancient edifice, hear gladly on every side what is being done to open wide the ways, to enlarge the spirit of a grand old community, which may be narrow-minded and inconsequent at times, but which recognises honour as a part of its creed, and to which votaries cling from traditions that have almost become a part of their very natures. One point after another is stretched, one tenet after another is tacitly abandoned, things are cried in the market-place now which in my youth were scarcely whispered. I have been told of a sect now existing at Geneva so wide and comprehensive in its views that many who thought themselves excluded from all communities now find that they can conscientiously belong to this.

Some of the best and wisest spirits of our time are anxiously trying to do all they can to counteract the cry that the Church as a Church is no living institution, excluding as it does many of the most honest and scrupulous of its members from holy orders, and appealing to the uneducated in a very limited and partial degree; and while these reformers, preserving as far as they can the spirit of the creed of England, are attempting to enlarge the profession of its doctrines, and allowing to every man more and more liberty to determine for himself that inscrutable point of connection between the known and the unknown, the spiritual and the material, another class are in a very simple and effectual manner closing the doors of the Church

(and I am speaking no metaphor) in the faces of its votaries, and doing more by that turn of the key in the too well-greased lock to abolish in the minds of those who are thus excluded all realisation of a living actual sympathy in the community, than all the doubts, expressed and non-expressed, of honest sceptics, or the railings of fanatics and scoffers have ever done. Why are church doors closed, bolted, and barred? why are pew-openers and sightseers the only people who are allowed to enter from one week's end to another? Why am I at this minute—it is about nine o'clock on Sunday morning—the member of an established church, which is shut up, with drawn blinds, into which there is no admittance for two hours at least?

Here in this little village, high up among the Rhoetian Alps, a bell is ringing, as I have said, and the peasants are coming over the mountains and down the green slopes that lead to the little chapel by the torrent. It is only a low white shed, a little larger than the neighbouring chalets, or baitas, as they call them here. It is quite shabby and humble, and white-wash is falling from its walls, but the bell rings evening after evening for the "Ave," the people go in and come out and walk away quietly by the torrent or along the narrow mountain paths that travel by rock and waterfall and by fragrant scent of thyme and through fresh pine woods to higher Alps near the snow peaks that encircle our valley; and all day long, on Sundays and week days, the worm-eaten door of the chapel is open, and one lamp burns dimly. Whenever you look into the humble little place the lamp is burning, and one or other kneeling figure is there, peasant or traveller. On Sundays the country people come in

full dignity of knee-breeches, and wives and sweet-hearts, and huge red umbrellas, and streaming out after the mass sit in a row on the low wall in front of the establishment, while the little children run about and peep through the wooden planks of the bridge at the boiling waters below.

This seems a long round-about way of entering my protest, and petitioning for leave to enter the church to which I belong, but the contrast between our own system and that which I see here has struck me very much. Not long ago, at Oxford, one day I remember walking from one noble old chapel to another and wondering at the barred doors: in one place a shutter had been left a little open, showing a glimpse of aisle and lofty arch and peaceful light, but the outer gate was safely locked, for fear any passer-by should enter.

It seems a small thing to ask for—leave to go in now and then out of the busy street of life to a quiet place hallowed by association, and to stay there for a little while among surroundings which should bring peaceful and holy things before us. To some natures and temperaments such minutes, coming, maybe, at a moment of doubt or loneliness, would count more than even a whole three hours' service and sermon all complete, and perhaps unsuited to their need, and coming when the stress was over and help no longer of any avail.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

OUT OF SEASON.

MAIDS-OF-ALL-WORK AND BLUE BOOKS.

Farewell rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say,
For now foule sluts in dairies
Doe fare as well as they;
And tho' they sweepe their hearths no less
Than maydes were wont to do,
Yet who of late for cleanliness
Finds sixpence in her shoe?

I.

WE have all heard of a benevolent race of little pixies who live underground in subterranean passages and galleries. While people are asleep in their beds these friendly little creatures will come up from their homes in the depths of the earth and dust, and sort and put our houses in order, and repair the damages and waste of the day, light the fires, fill the cans, milk the cows. There is no end to their good offices. They reject all thanks, and are apt to disappear and give warning upon small provocation. Sir Walter Scott has written their history, and as one reads one might sometimes almost fancy that an allegory is being told of some little servant-maid of modern times—I do not mean the comfortable, respectable upper house and parlour-maid of villa and crescent-life, but of the little

struggling maid-of-all-work dwelling under our feet or in the narrow passages and defiles of our great city. Do they when their work is finished sometimes emerge from their subterranean haunts, sit by flowing streams, float along upon lily leaves, or sport in moonlit fields, dancing in circles? I am afraid no such pleasant recreation is reserved for our poor little household drudges.

Most people who have ever rung bells, found their hot water ready set for their use, their breakfast waiting their convenience, will be interested in a Report recently laid before the House of Commons—the Blue Book which concerns these little maids.

It is written in the simplest way. Its rhetoric is made up of a few dates and numbers. Its phrases represent so much work done rather than words strung together. It has romance enough in its pages, and pathos and tragedy. They are classed *a*, *b*, and *c* for convenience. This remorseless record of life as it exists for a certain number of people is tabulated for easy reference; so are the sorrows and indifferences of which it treats in a few quiet words. The history of these 650 girls will be found in an appendix, says one sentence. No wonder that reviewers hesitate to pronounce upon such a literature.

“In January, 1873, you told me,” says Mrs. Senior, “that you wished to have a woman’s view as to the effect on girls of the System of Education at Pauper Schools. You asked me if I would undertake to visit the workhouse schools and report to you the conclusions at which I arrived. . . .

“I have given my attention almost exclusively to questions affecting the physical, moral, and domestic

training at the schools. I have not attempted to judge of the scholastic work, as I required all the time allowed me for looking into the matters on which I knew that you more especially desired the judgment of a woman. I divided the enquiry into two parts:

"1. As to the present working of the system in schools.

"2. As to the after career of girls who have been placed out in the world."

This first part means many months of ceaseless investigation into metropolitan schools, country schools, orphanages, reformatories, &c.; the boarding-out system, as carried out in Cumberland and the North, &c.

The second division represents no less labour of a different kind.

"My next endeavour was to ascertain the history of the girls who had been placed in service from the schools during the last two years. I obtained the names and addresses, more or less exact, of about 650 girls who had been placed out in service in the years 1871—2 in all parts of London and its suburbs, and the history of each girl, as derived from the books or otherwise, was sought to be verified by personal investigation. The very great number of visits to be made, and enquiries to be set on foot, involved in this first investigation, could not within the time allowed be undertaken by myself personally, but the work was effectually carried out by the help of several indefatigable friends.

"I enquired myself personally into the cases of fifty of these girls," says Mrs. Senior, who has not been content with merely writing a report. She has lived it, heard it speak, gone straight to the human beings concerned in her Tables. Her own personal investi-

gations are contained in Appendix G; in Appendix F are the histories investigated by her assistants.

"In order to ascertain the school history of each child," she continues, "I have usually found it necessary to consult, besides admission and discharge books, five enormous alphabetical registers, numerous volumes of relief lists, creed registers, service register, and chaplain's visiting books."

This is but a small part of the labour to be undertaken in writing a report of which every detail almost is a living figure in the great and terrible sum which is set before us all to work out as best we can, not only in Blue Books and pamphlets. Anybody may supply a running commentary upon the text, by looking about and using that useful power of common sense with which we are more or less gifted. The facts and data are not past things and distant conclusions—they are now, and round about us. The children are there, the schools are there, the maid-servants are in the kitchens, the report is published, and anyone may read it who chooses.

II.

We should be indeed ungrateful to the work of those wise and far-seeing people who first turned their attention to the crying evils which existed in workhouse schools, and who first insisted upon separate schools for the children, if we did not begin by acknowledging that whatever is done now, and whatever further improvement may be found possible, theirs was the first and decisive step in the abolition of a great abuse. The

workhouses are necessarily refuges for every species of failure in life, in conduct, in mind, in body. Such depressing and contaminating influence is the very last to which young children should ever be subjected. States of mind are as catching, especially at an early age, as some states of body. To see people who have neglected their opportunities, deserted their duties, succumbed to every sort of temptation, provided for by the state in a sort of semi-Hades of apathetic discontent, must certainly have no good effect upon the younger generation, already inheriting, perhaps, many of the proclivities that have brought this dismal fate upon their seniors.

The children, seeing their father a willing prisoner in fustian, their mother plodding doggedly along the ward in her blue-striped livery, come to look upon this unsatisfying place as a future to look to. Apathy seems to them a natural condition, low talk and common ways will be familiar sounds, they insensibly imbibe the fetid influence of the condition to which all these people have been brought; by misfortune was it?—or by wrongdoing?—who shall say, or whose the wrong-doing that has doomed these poor souls.

“The atmosphere of a workhouse that contains adult paupers is tainted with vice,” says Mr. Tufnell, in his Report on the training of pauper children. “No one who regards the future happiness of the children would ever wish them to be educated within its precincts.”

A matron of thirty years' experience to whom I once spoke, shook her head and said that she found it practically impossible to prevent ill effects from the contact of children and adults in the workhouse under her care.

Miss Cobbe says, speaking of the state of work-houses so lately as 1861—"Whatever may be our judgment of the treatment of the male able-bodied paupers, very decidedly condemnatory must be our conclusion as regards the management of female adults, for whom it may be said that a residence in the workhouse is commonly moral ruin. The last rags and shreds of modesty which the poor creature may have brought in from the outer world, are ruthlessly torn away by the hideous gossip over the labour of oakum picking, or in the idle lounging about the women's yard." And in a note we read—"In one metropolitan union it was found on enquiry, that of eighty girls who had left the workhouse and gone to service, not one had continued in a respectable condition of life."*

The commissioners appointed to enquire into the system felt that nothing but evil could come to the children if things were allowed to continue in the state in which they found them. They worked with unintermitting energy and decision, and it was at their suggestion that separate and district schools were first instituted; separate schools being schools attached to one workhouse only, and built at a distance from the house; district schools being peopled by the children from three or four different workhouses, all brought together for greater convenience in teaching and organising.

Great sums of money have been spent. Fine buildings have been erected. Hundreds and hundreds of little paupers are now being struck off, taught, drilled, and educated by good teachers, with careful superintendents, in large houses, costing large sums of money.

* This statement applies to twelve years ago.

There can be no comparison between the present and the past, and there is not one of these children that does not owe gratitude to those who first laboured to deliver them from the house of bondage to which they seemed condemned. But it does not follow that because money has been spent, no further improvement is possible; and because some people have been wise and devoted, that no further good is to be done.

It seems as if every fact and theory of life had to be rediscovered by each of us practitioners of life in turn. We read about things, see them happen, listen to advice, give it more or less intelligently; but we each have to find out for ourselves what relations such things bear to ourselves—what is human in all this printers' ink, which of the figures come to life in our own case, instead of being units or statistics—which among our fellow-creatures are actually living persons for us; duties and claims, wants, necessities, possibilities.

The writer happened to come across a living statistic on the side of good and hopeful things, a bright-faced little creature in a Sunday bonnet, who gave her some account of her experience in her first place. She had been brought up in a separate school and had gone out about thirteen.

"Oh, I've been a servant for years!" said the little thing, who was ready enough to tell us all about herself. "I learnt ironing of the lady; I didn't know nothing about it. I didn't know nothing about anything. I didn't know where to buy the wood for the fire," exploding with laughter at the idea. "I run along the street and asked the first person I sor where the wood-shop was. I was frightened—oh, I was. They wasn't

particular kind in my first place. I had plenty to eat—it wasn't anything of that. They jest give me an egg, and they says, 'There, get your dinner,' but not anything more. I had to do all the work. I'd no one to go to: oh! I cried the first night. I used to cry so," exploding again with laughter. "I had always slept in a ward full of other girls, and there I was all alone, and this was a great big house—oh, so big! and they told me to go down stairs, in a room by the kitchen all alone, with a long black passage. I might have screamed, but nobody would have heard. An archytec the gen'lman was. I got to break everything, I was so frightened; things tumbled down I shook so, and they sent me back to Mrs. —, at the schools. They said I was no good, as I broke everything; and so I did—oh, I was frightened! . . . Then I got a place in a family where there was nine children. I was about fourteen then. I earned two shillings a week. I used to get up and light the fire, bath them and dress them, and git their breakfasts, and the lady sometimes would go up to London on business, and then I had the baby too, and it couldn't be left, and had to be fed. I'd take them all out for a walk on the common. There was one a cripple. She couldn't walk about. She was about nine year old. I used to carry her on my back. Then there was dinner, and to wash up after; and then by that time it would be tea-time agin. And then I had to put the nine children to bed and bath them, and clean up the rooms and the fires at night; there was no time in the morning. And then there would be the gen'lman's supper to get. Oh! that was a hard place. I wasn't in bed till twelve, and I'd be up by six. I stopped there nine months. I hadn't no one to help

me. Oh, yes, I had; the baker, he told me of another place. I've been there three year. I'm cook, and they are very kind; but I tell the girls there's none 'on 'em had such work as me. I'm very fond of reading; but I ain't no time for reading." . . .

She was a neat, bright, clever, stumpy little thing, with a sweet sort of merry voice.

"You would think Susy a giant if you could see some of them; you have no notion what little creatures they all are," said Mrs. —, when I made some remarks about the child's size—and almost immediately came another visitor, smaller, shorter, paler than the first. This little maid had come to talk over the chances of a friend, to whom she seemed much attached.

"There is one thing about her," said this mite, with some dignity; "she don't come up to my shoulder. It's aginst her getting a good place."

This little woman had been single-handed in a school where there were 50 pupils to let in twice a-day, as well as two sets of lodgers to attend to. The owners of the house were very kind, but too busy themselves to help, and the poor pixie had struggled until her health had broken down. Her feet were swelled; she could no longer hold out when Mrs. — found her. It is a terrific battle if one comes to think of it. One little soldier single-handed aginst a house and its wants, and the dust and the smuts, and the food and the inmates, and the bells, and the beds, and the fire and water to be served up in cans and stoves and plates. Atlas could carry the world on his shoulder, but what was his task compared to poor little Betty's?

III.

The writer has a friend among District Schools, who has more than once admitted her into the wards under his direction. At the time when he and his wife were appointed to their present position, the schools were in a bad and unsatisfactory state; notwithstanding all advantage of situation and arrangement, and liberal support, the health of the school-children was not what it should have been! Regularity, economy, uniformity—all these things seem desirable enough; but there is a point where we must all acknowledge that such things are intended for men's use, and not for their constraint alone, and my friends have made it their business to find out where that point exists.

Mrs. Senior suggests, among other things, some sort of home life in the schools: wards broken up, if possible, into divisions, which might rectify their weary uniformity—some system of home government; the nurse, perhaps, acting as mother, and the elder girls attending to the little ones and babies. "The children want *mothering*," says the Blue Book, in the natural tones of a woman's voice.

About some necessities there can be but one opinion—air, water, room, change, well-cooked food, ease, backs to the forms—all these things our Blue Book recommends, not in official language, but in a voice that speaks far more truly the real feeling which is now abroad. Judging from signs we see daily (perhaps even more among the rulers than among the

ruled), the great age of red tape seems coming to a close. The good goddess Hygeia must be smiling as she sees her temples rising, her votaries assembling, singing her praises in public and in private, and worshipping her with many ablutions and ceremonies of mighty import!

My friends, Mr. and Mrs. —, who have partially tried one of Mrs. Senior's plans in the establishment under their direction, say that their experiment has had a most excellent result. They began of their own accord by creating a nursery, without any idea of the good effects which were to follow, but they very soon found that the girls allowed to attend to the children delighted in the work, softened to the little ones, and the children themselves got on better than when they were lost in the great body of the house. The nursery is detached from the main building, and when we walked in, it was broad day-light—eight o'clock—June bed-time. The little paupers were going to bed in the great bright wards. All the windows were open; the children were taking off their blue stockings and heavy little boots. We met one three-year-old pattering adventurously down a passage, and carrying its shift in its hand. There were about a dozen little creatures in one room, where an elder girl was undressing them. They could take off their thick boots for themselves; one ambitious Jenny was tugging at a string with a serious flushed face; a friend about her own size was looking on with deep interest. We said "Good-night" to Jenny, who was too much absorbed to respond, but the little friend stuffed her hand into mine. It was a pretty sight in the next room to come upon all the babies toddling round their tub and splash-

ing the water with their hands. They were plump, comfortable little bodies, waiting their turn to be scrubbed, and they certainly did credit to kind Mrs. ——'s efforts for their comfort.

I don't think they spoke, these small nymphs in blue stockings and unbleached calico; they looked up at us with sweet, innocent faces; one said "Coo-bye;" one laughed and showed us her bed behind the door; another, a little baby boy, toddled forward half naked from the group—he was the youngest, and accustomed to be noticed; and so the kindly waters of the tub—that tepid evening stream that floats so many babes, that sparkles to so many little splashing hands—came flowing with its kind, refreshing depths into the work-house nursery. The setting sun was shining through the tall open windows, and soft June breaths were blowing in.

For many years all these windows had been carefully filled in, the master told us; but now at last they have removed the ground glass, and let in the sight of the green, and the sunset and the summer-time. In the schoolroom especially the difference was very noticeable.

It was a Sunday evening, and while I was talking to Mrs. —— I had heard a distant sort of hymn in the air. The girls were singing as we came into the great schoolroom, about fifty girls were sitting upon the benches, and a music-master was at a harmonium playing and beating time.

They sang very sweetly, with very shrill and touching voices, one little class apart chaunted the hymn, and the others joined in. It was something about soldiers of the cross, with a sort of chorus,

As I stood by the superintendent he pointed to the window, through which we could see a dazzle of June and green and distant hills, and a great field, across which a long procession of these young soldiers went winding and rewinding in the sweet basking evening. One thought of the battle before them—all the hard work, the troubles, and friendlessness of their poor little lives. They were not abashed, and chaunted on with all the might of their young throats, an unconscious prayer for safety, for help, for courage, and defence. While the hymn lasts they are safe enough. Then one day it breaks off for each of them. "At sixteen," says the Board, they are free, and the little soldiers struggle off to meet the world. They can cater for themselves; come, go, loiter as they will; they have had experience enough, advice enough; or, for a change, there is the workhouse, where they will find a new teaching, and a new code of morality.

IV.

Perhaps to the general reader it may not be the details, or the classifications, or the results of the enquiries contained in this Blue Book, that will seem most interesting, but the feeling which is unconsciously shown by its very statistics—the unaffected goodness of heart and womanly mothership for all that is young, childish, foolish, and suffering. No one can deny facts and the inevitable fatality of causes, of which the effects are, in this instance, the little stunted beings that crowd our schools and educational establishments. But such Reports as these do at least suggest a sort of

law leading both to good and to evil—a fatality of good as well as of wrong doing—and make one believe that the genuine interest which some people are feeling, and which has already shown itself in such satisfactory and practical details, may reach many a poor child, by signs more and more comfortable, and tangible, and cheerful.

Where a book ends and the reader begins is as hard to determine as any other of those objective and subjective problems which are sometimes set. Here, as we read, the paragraphs turn into every day; into the writer, into the children, into one's own conscience, into other people's—into work, trouble, necessity, into the influences by which people affect one another. Books teach us to think; then comes action to interpret thinking into signs and ceremonies; then come human beings who enact the signs, who are our consciences, revealed, perhaps, our thoughts, responsive, who are in themselves hope fulfilled, who combine in some strange way all the moods, questions, facts, that we see tangibly spread out before us. It is almost as if one could look round at times and see the whole secret history of conscience mapped out in actual things, and doings; some of them stupid, jealous, shamefully incomplete; others gentle, and generous, and effective.

Two facts Mrs. Senior wishes us to bear in mind, if we try to draw some conclusion from that view of life which her report presents to us. One is, that the schools have to deal with bad material. The poor little heroines of this epic are stunted, stupid, un-receptive for the most part, though some people may well ask, Why should they be clever? How can they

grow tall? and What is it that they have to receive? They come to the schools because there is no home in the world outside for them, because their parents have come to grief, or to trouble of some sort. They have to go out into the world again with their unsatisfactory little bodies and minds, because the schools can keep them no longer, at an age when other more fortunate children are shielded and loved and cared for, to struggle for themselves with difficulties, mistresses, incapacities, and dangers of every description. So much for the second division of Mrs. Senior's report. As regards that which applies to the changes she would wish to see in the schools, she says these apply to the system itself, and not to the working of it. She says, "I believe that, as a class, there are few people so painstaking, kind-hearted, and indefatigable, as the present lot of officials connected with pauper and district schools." It is, perhaps, because of this that, for some years past, some of these officials and managers have been dissatisfied with the results of their hard and constant work—of all this money and trouble given. In district schools, as elsewhere, experience had to be paid for; and when such vast numbers are collected together, every trifling experiment must necessarily count a thousand-fold, and be multiplied again and again. The evil is gigantic, and almost impossible to grapple with.

V.

At present, one great difficulty consists in the classification of the children to be provided for. There are the orphans, whose only home is the parish and the school; the deserted children, whose parents may reappear to claim them, as well as those whose parents are incapacitated temporarily or otherwise; and there are, thirdly, the casuals, who are sometimes taken in and out by their parents as often as *eight times* in a year, and for whom, under existing circumstances, any legislation must be very indefinite.

The real body of the school consists of the children who have no other home to turn to, and no personal ties to lean upon, and whose welfare, as Mrs. Senior says, should, in any doubtful question, be made the main consideration.

Some masters say that, were the classes divided, and the good influence of the permanent scholars removed from the casuals, these poor little creatures would become so demoralised that they would not have a chance for improvement. Speaking in a general way, Mrs. Senior says that in large schools the officers hold that more good than harm is done by mixing the children; while the officers in smaller schools (who have perhaps better means of judging of individual cases) hold the contrary.

She goes on to say—"The difficulties of managing the pauper schools, even under the present system, are so great that one can heartily sympathise with the

dread expressed by some officers of a change which, it appears to them, would add to their difficulties. We are none the less bound, however, to look simply at the question whether the presence of the casual children does or does not cause any moral deterioration to the permanent children, whose interests are chiefly at stake."

Here is a picture of the state of things that might occur, with every careful endeavour for right doing. "To the eye of the visitor the outward order of the schools is in most respects perfect, and it seems generally agreed that the presence of a mass of children already drilled into order has the best effect on new comers. We cannot, however, judge by external order of the real effect of the presence of the casuals. Whatever evil they may have learnt during their vagrant life, they know that it is for their interest to submit to discipline while at school, to conceal what could bring them into discredit with their superiors, and to avoid conduct and language that would entail punishment. Whatever discipline may exist in the school, the children in the playground and dormitories are under little supervision."

"In one school I saw a child of six years old whose language was so horrible that the matron was obliged to send her, as soon as lessons were over, to one of the dormitories in order to get her away from the other children. She was probably too young to know that it was to her interest to hold her tongue in the presence of officers. In a few years she would be more cunning, and keep her bad language for the playground and dormitories. Another matron told me of a family of sisters who used to go in and out and

return each time more and more versed in sin. From another I heard, among many examples, of a family of children who were constantly on the tramp, sleeping like animals in sheds, wandering about the country; children who were at first good and tractable, but who returned each time with more and more knowledge of evil."

"Among many officers I found one who spoke even more strongly than the rest, and whose opinion I consider of great value. She fully recognised the large amount of mischief which can be done in a school even by one child, and felt that the *least* important duty of a mistress is the supervision of children during school hours."

Many of the changes Mrs. Senior recommends are simple, feasible, and will apply to our own children in our own homes as well as to those in this strange cosmopolitan refuge which the necessity of the times has imposed upon our citizens.

If our children have round shoulders, shorn heads, weak eyes—if a certain number of them seem dull, stupid, and incapable of the common duties of life—if their nurses and teachers complain of their bad temper, untruthfulness, apathy, we must feel that for these special children, much as we have done already, we have not yet done enough.

Suppose they are ill, with long and chronic ailments, if we leave them for hours and hours unoccupied in a bare room learning a habit of idleness and dullness only too easy to acquire, and sometimes impossible to forget, we must feel that in one sense only we are doing our duty. You cannot inculcate moral qualities by word of command; intelligence, self-

reliance, trust, sympathy—these things can't be dealt out in copy-books or written upon a slate.

Teachers and managers of schools have themselves raised the standard of that which is expected; and as the standard is raised, there will be less and less machinery, and more and more of natural feeling introduced, if it pleases Heaven to give us all more wisdom and knowledge of the laws which govern life and human beings,—from members of the Cabinet down to little pauper children.

A wise and experienced person writes:—

"We teach them indeed to read and write, and read and sing hymns. All that part of their education is probably quite as good as what is given in the day-schools of the ordinary poor. Also we teach them that part of religion which may be conveyed in the form of question and answer. But it is only the sum of all that makes human nature, more emphatically woman's nature, beautiful, useful, or happy. Her moral being is left wholly uncultivated. She possesses nothing of her own, not even her clothes or the hair on her head. How is she to go out inspired with respect for the rights of property, and accustomed to control the natural impulses of childish covetousness? Worse than all, the human affections of the girl are all checked, and with them, almost inevitably, those religious ones which naturally rise through the earthly parents' love to the Father in Heaven. The workhouse girl is the child of an institution. She is driven about with the rest of the flock, from dormitory to schoolroom, and from schoolroom to workhouse yard, not harshly or unkindly, but always as one of a herd, whether well

or ill cared for. She is nobody's Mary or Kate, to be individually thought of."

VI.

Having gone carefully into the details of the management of these schools, Mrs. Senior, as I have said, proceeded to follow up the results of this management; and her figures, as compared to those in the note of Miss Cobbe's article, are less discouraging than they might seem at a first glance.

"Following out the scheme already stated, we took some trouble to trace out the careers of the girls brought up in the great amalgamated schools and in the separate schools, and, with the help of some experienced persons, to compare them together and divide them into classes. The result was as follows:—

	Girls brought up in District Schools.			Girls brought up in Separate Schools.		
Good	.	.	28	.	.	51
Fair	.	.	64	.	.	82
Unsatisfactory	.	.	106	.	.	78
Bad	.	.	47	.	.	35
			<u>245</u>			<u>246</u>

Some idea may be formed of the difficulty and trouble which these few numbers have given to those who compiled them, and who have tried to add up this sum in human nature, by a glance at the Appendix, where will be found a history of each one of these cases traced out from records in school books, to the endless streets, suburban roads, lines of brick and rail

and humanity along which these little entries drift to their fate. The girls themselves have been produced from their back kitchens, and the mistress encountered in their parlours. Out of complaints and cross-complaints, and good sense and moderate judgment, the daily story becomes a figure again counting in its place.

It is not long ago since I heard someone (with a right than which there is none greater) speaking of the force of contained power and of simple statement as compared to that of vehemence and picturesqueness of language. Here, in the Appendix of Mrs. Senior's Report, are histories, of which I have selected two or three at random. They are not very eventful, and their force most assuredly consists in this power of facts, tending towards the same results; uneventful units, whose histories count in the great sum just as surely as those of the others for whom they rub and scrub and toil.

I might multiply examples, but they are but repetitions of one another and all in the same way seem to point more or less to two necessities—that of some greater individuality of training when in the schools, and of more complete system of supervision when the school has become daily life.

Here is poor C. D., whose career, as it is traced from book to book, seems typical enough. She is clever, with "high" notions, and goes to service; and then she loses her places again and again, reappears in one book and another, "admission, dismissal, readmission." Here she is under the heading of "distress from service," sent to a home; then follow six admissions, six discharges; lastly, she goes to Highgate

Infirmary, and there comes the last entry of all, "Died June 22, 1871, of phthisis, aged eighteen."

There are naughty girls, and a certain number of good ones, in the lists published by Mrs. Senior.

G. goes from place to place, has fainting fits, hates going to her aunt between places, as relations don't like being at expense. First place—too hard, not in bed till past twelve sometimes. J. M. S., one eye, half witted, no friends, twenty years of age. J. T., deserted child, no friends, whitlow, round shoulder.

As specimens of the class which may well be termed unsatisfactory, come—

No. 1. Pilferer, untruthful, idle, incorrigibly dirty.

No. 2. Very dishonest, dirty. Mistress, a kind person, keeps her because she cannot give her a character.

No. 4. Being refused leave to go out, howls till a crowd is collected.

No. 5. Improving, but throws herself on the ground when people attempt to teach her.

No. 12. Clean, destructive, curiously apathetic.

No. 20. Very bad temper, unkind to children, dishonest, untruthful, dirty. Two mistresses give an equally bad account.

Finally come the girls who have absconded with or without valuables, who are known to be leading immoral lives.

By 15 Vict. capt. II. sec. 3 & 4, the guardians are required, so long as the servant is under sixteen, and resides within five miles of the workhouse, to visit the person at least twice in every year, and report in writing if the person is subjected to cruel treatment in any respect.

At some of the schools the chaplains keep up with the girls in their places after the official hour has struck for them. But when one remembers the average length of a man's life, and the number of girls that pass through the schools, it will be seen how impossible a task this must be for any single person to accomplish thoroughly.

"We have found," says the Report, "many really admirable mistresses, homely women, taking a maternal interest in the girls; sparing no pains to teach and inspect personally the work of the house, and who understood that the little servant needed some pleasure and relaxation. Without any parade we have often heard from a mistress of a shilling given now and then to the girl to be spent in her own pleasure, of little presents to her subscribed for by the children." But at the same time the statistics show how many there are among them who disappear entirely, and in the case of workhouse girls we know too well what this disappearance means.

A friend of Mrs. Senior, writing to her, says:—

"The answers given to me by the mistresses of girls sent to service from the metropolitan pauper schools were so uniform in character that I think the system of training must be in a great measure answerable for characteristics so general and so strongly marked. I have made enquiries as to 40 girls.

"The girls were all without exception well taught in reading and writing; in arithmetic, as far as I could ascertain, they were fairly competent.

"All without exception were well taught in needle-work, as regards the mere execution of stitches; and

*all with one exception were unable to arrange or do any sort of needlework without constant supervision.**

"All without exception are well taught in the elements of religious knowledge.

"All without exception are curiously apathetic in temperament, described to me as not caring for anything, taking no interest, not enjoying, seeming like old people. All with one exception were stunted in growth and physical development, even where the health was good.

"If we compare the girls in pauper schools with girls kept at home by family necessity, or sent to service at fourteen or fifteen, I think we shall find the following differences:—The house girls have infinitely more life and energy, and it is much easier to teach them their work. They are often very troublesome to learn at first, but at least half of them are fairly good tempered; those with defective tempers are seldom invincibly stubborn or outrageous, and there is no difference between their physical development and that of all other classes."

A matron of a workhouse said to me the other day—"I knew a nice, good girl who was dismissed then and there by her mistress for what do you think, ma'am? for falling asleep in the day-time. I say it is not natural for a girl of sixteen to go fast asleep in the day-time, unless she is tired out and can't keep up any longer."

"People turn them off and let them go, without a thought," she continued. "I myself met a poor child wandering about in the street, not knowing where to

* This seems an excellent illustration of the defect of too much system in education.

turn. I took her home, and she is now my servant; but there is no knowing where she might be if I hadn't chanced to meet her."

Three girls, who were just going out to service from a district school, came into the superintendent's parlour the other day while I happened to be there; they were girls of sixteen, but they looked scarcely thirteen in their crops and pinafores. One of them appeared utterly stupid, and seemed to stare at my questions instead of answering them. The second was silent but intelligent, with wondering blue eyes and a very sweet expression. The third girl talked a good deal, but only by rote; she had been out already, but had been sent back by her mistress, she said. When I asked her what she had done in her place, she wandered off into some housemaid's catechism.

"What did you think about the first morning when you awoke?" said Mrs.——.

"I couldn't think where I was," said the girl; "it was so small all round, with paper on the walls."

"And what happened next?" said Mrs.——.

Here the little housemaid started off rapidly. "Rise at 'alf-past five, throw open the window, light the kitching fire, then do the parlour, carefully turning down the 'earth rug for fear it should be spiled, then sweep and dust the sitting-room, scattering tea-leaves," &c.

Perhaps the little thing's practice had not been equal to her precept; happily for herself she was still of an age to be received into the school and into her pinafore again. If she breaks down a second time, she will only have the workhouse for a refuge.

I have been told in one district school that the

most troublesome and unmanageable girls are those who have, by the desire of the guardians, passed through a workhouse, and remained there for some time before being despatched to the school.

VII.

Women are, perhaps, naturally more suspicious and nervously impressionable than men, and for this very reason are better able to observe those details which so greatly concern little children and young girls. Surely it is a wise and far-seeing legislature that allows for this difference; that attempts to suit the intelligence at its command to the work to be accomplished.

Here we find a woman doing woman's work, patiently following out detail after detail, minutely inspecting wards, and clothes, and apparatus of every kind, reporting conscientiously, and bringing forward her long year's work. It is for other minds to generalise and legislate again upon this work, which seems to have been honestly carried out, and unweariedly pursued to its end.

Miss Cobbe describes an experiment that was tried by some ladies at Bristol not long ago. They acquainted themselves with the addresses of the girls going into service, called on each mistress, expressed their interest in the little servant, and asked permission for her to attend a Sunday afternoon class. Invariably it has been found that the mistresses take in good part such visits, and with proper courtesy.

Mrs. Senior would further add to this a system of

Government supervision. The scheme, which is simple enough, consists of a certain number of paid agents to visit the young servants in their places; a certain number of ladies to befriend them; a certain number of post-cards ready addressed for the girls to post upon leaving their situations; one central office, or registry, where their names might be entered into books; and lastly, a certain number of small homes for them to go to in the intervals of service, where they may find help and advice. It is nothing new; but after all it is not anything new that any of us want; only the old blessing of asking and receiving, of friends and helpful succour answering to the call of our forlorn voices.

And what prayer, in words, in works, in goodwill, was ever prayed that was not answered in one way or another? We look life in the face, and hear of the laws that seem to rule its progress; we watch years go by, read Reports, see people in every sort of trouble, failure, and flurry, trying to regulate and order the disorder. Some are praying to God, others praying to men. As we watch the rout go by, as we travel along it ourselves, we cannot but be struck by the importance of every day, as well as by its profanity, by the meaning of its trivialities, amenities, and co-operations, all dominated by a law of which we dimly recognise the rule—a law to which we may open our hearts if we will, as it reaches us in this our common every day, our sacred every day. And by this supreme law each one of us in turn is touched. You are responsible to it, you wretched orphans flung upon evil shores; you are responsible, wise matrons, safe in port, anchored and sheltered from storm; you children, awakening in rows in the wards of the great refuges; you rulers and

overseers, looking out afar; you critics and penny-a-liners and young men, maidens and old maids, according to your light and your power of life.

And besides this solemn law of the duty, varying in degree for each of us, there is also a gift, divine though we call it human, a multiplying, renovating charity, of pity and goodwill. It does not fail though the multitude is so great, and though the bread and the fishes that have been given by the Master to dispense among the hungry crowd seem so inadequate to their wants.

THE END.

October



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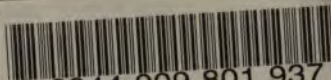
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